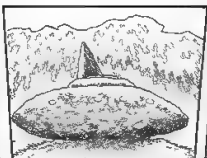


ROMY!

HURRY!
OR WE'LL
BE
KILLED!

PANT

PANT



PANT

PANT

PANT



HEY, WHAT
HAPPENED?
WHAT'S
THAT STUFF
BEHIND
YOU?

QUICK!
GET
ON
BOARD!



THUD!



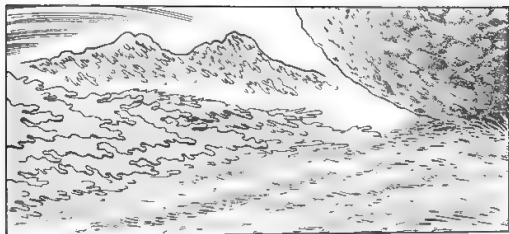
KOM!!



I KNEW
SOME-
THING'D
HAPPEN!



I TOLD YOU
GUYS THIS
PLANET'S
TABOO!



EVERY-
THING
IS
TURNING
GREY!

AND IT'S
COMING
AT US
IN
WAVES!



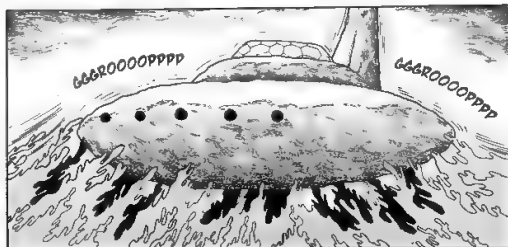
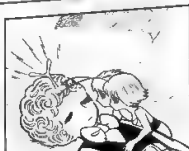
CLOSE THE DOOR!
THERE'S NOT A
MINUTE TO LOSE!
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE
OFF RIGHT AWAY!

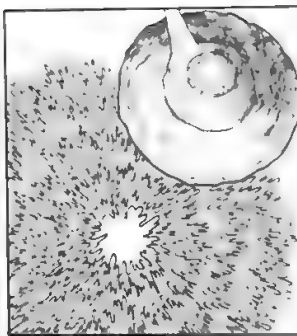
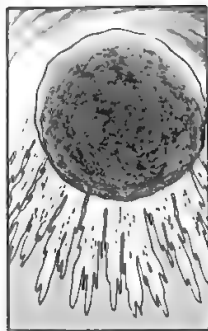
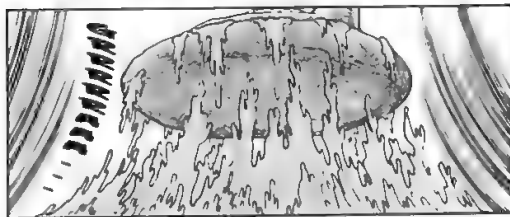
ONCE, AT
A SPACE
STATION,
I HEARD
A RUMOR
ABOUT
MAN-
EATER
PLANETS!

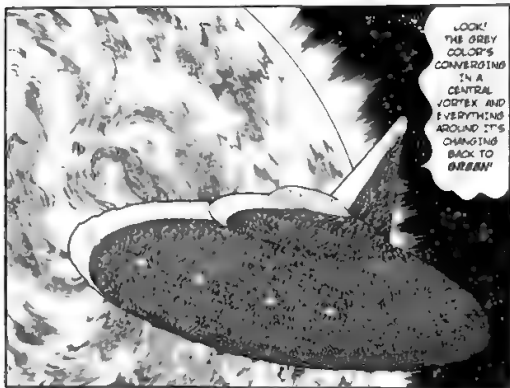
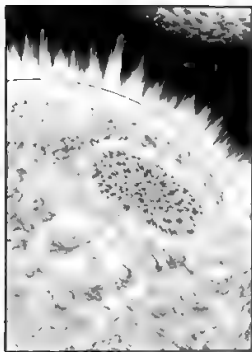
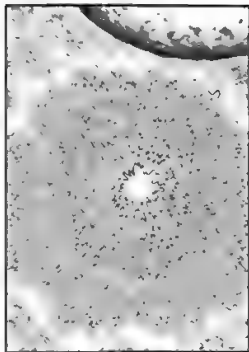


MAN-
EATER?

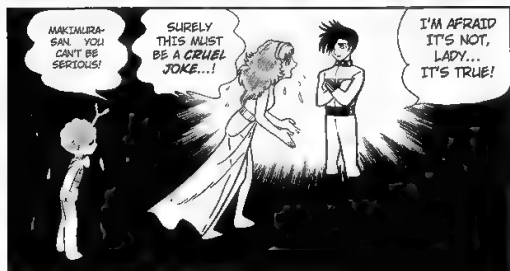
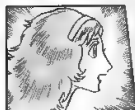
RIGHT. THE
PLANETS EAT
HUMANS! AND
THEY USE CLEAN
AIR AND GREENERY
TO ATTRACT US,
LIKE BAST!!

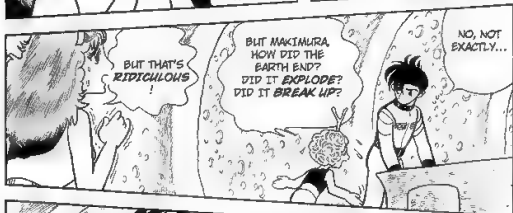














THERE'S NO END
TO THEM! SOME
GO BACK TO
THEIR ORIGINAL
PLANET...
OTHERS, IN
DESPAIR, BLOW
THEMSELVES UP
IN SPACE...



THERE ARE
TONS OF
SPACE
COLONISTS
JUST LIKE
YOU, WHO
WANT TO
RETURN TO
EARTH!




WHENEVER I
MEET THEM, I
ALWAYS TELL
THEM IT'S
USELESS, BUT
THEY DON'T
LISTEN...



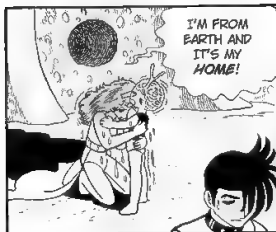
SO I'M
TELLING
YOU
NOW...



FOR YOUR
OWN SAKE,
GO BACK TO
EDEN IT!



B..BUT THIS CAN'T
BE! THERE'S NO WAY
I CAN BELIEVE THIS!



I'M FROM
EARTH AND
IT'S MY
HOME!



FOR
OVER A
HUNDRED
YEARS.



I'VE
DREAMED
OF ONE DAY
RETURNING
HOME...



NOW WHAT
WILL I
DO...?

ROMY,
DON'T
BE
SAD...



...

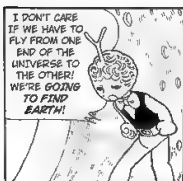
SO HOW
'BOUT IT
KOM?

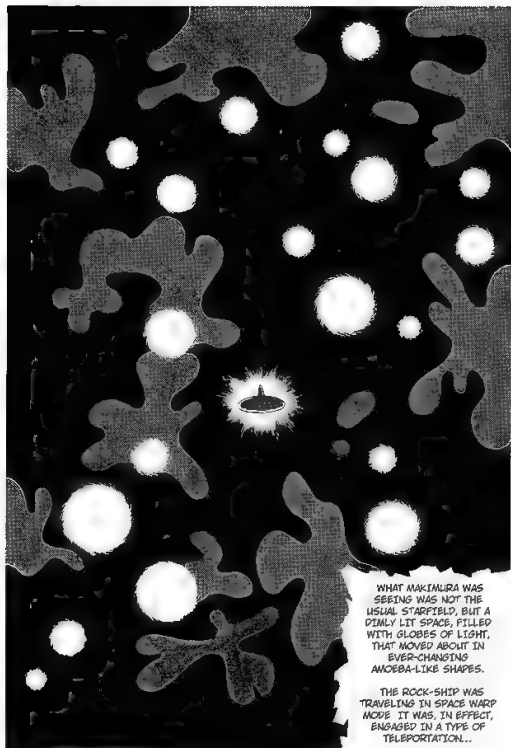
WHAT SAY WE
TAKE THIS
ROCK-SHIP
TO A LOCAL
SPACE BASE?



WE'RE GOING TO
EARTH! EVEN IF
IT'S JUST A
BURNED-OUT
SHELL, I'M
TAKING ROMY
TO IT!

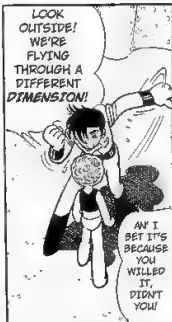
NEVER
!



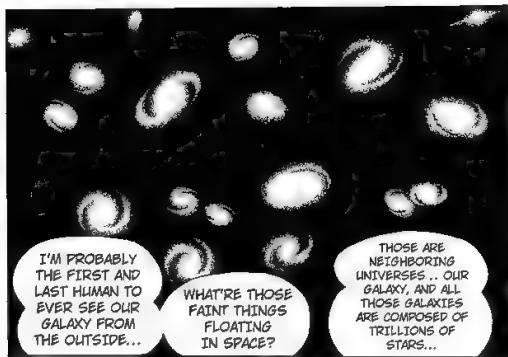
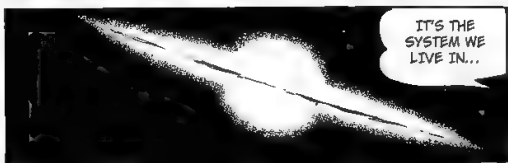
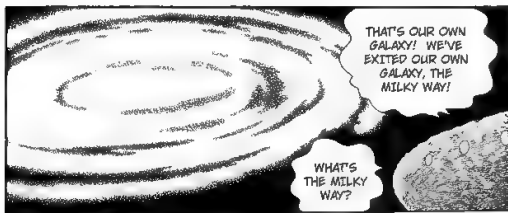


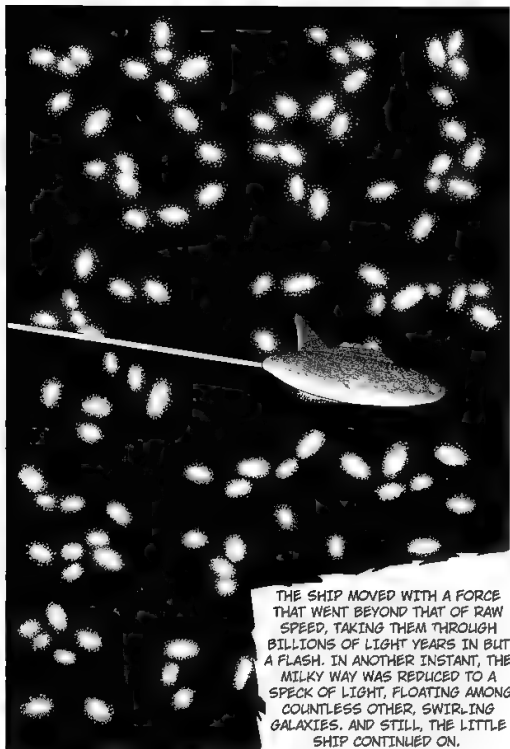
WHAT MAKIMURA WAS SEEING WAS NOT THE USUAL STARFIELD, BUT A DIMLY LIT SPACE, FILLED WITH GLOBES OF LIGHT, THAT MOVED ABOUT IN EVER-CHANGING AMOEBA-LIKE SHAPES.

THE ROCK-SHIP WAS TRAVELING IN SPACE WARP MODE. IT WAS, IN EFFECT, ENGAGED IN A TYPE OF TELEPORTATION...



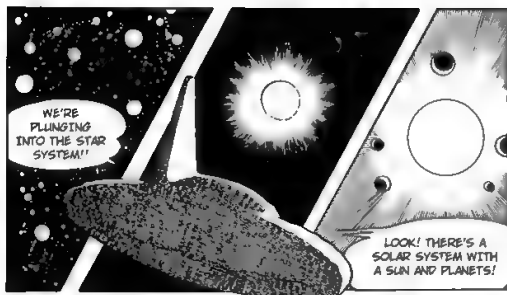


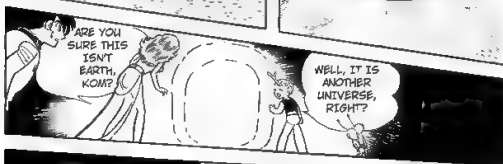
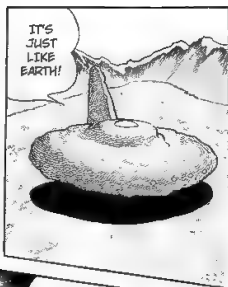
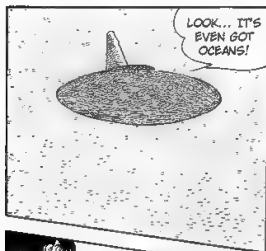


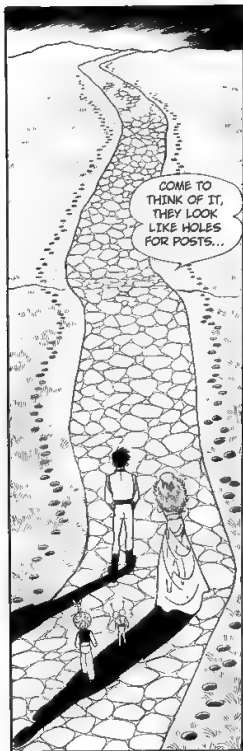


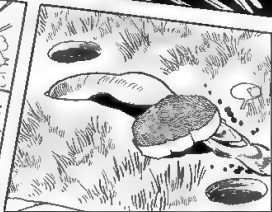
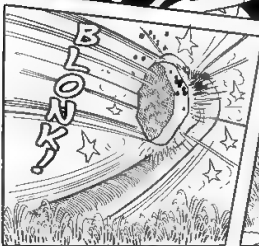
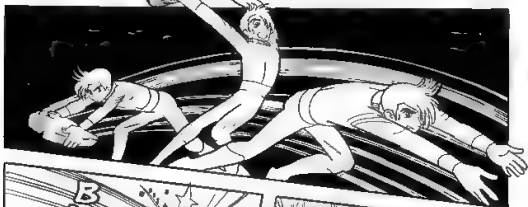
THE SHIP MOVED WITH A FORCE THAT WENT BEYOND THAT OF RAW SPEED, TAKING THEM THROUGH BILLIONS OF LIGHT YEARS IN BUT A FLASH. IN ANOTHER INSTANT, THE MILKY WAY WAS REDUCED TO A SPECK OF LIGHT, FLOATING AMONG COUNTLESS OTHER, SWIRLING GALAXIES. AND STILL, THE LITTLE SHIP CONTINUED ON.

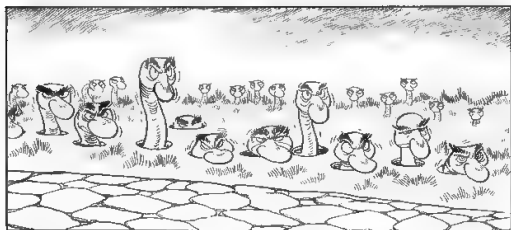


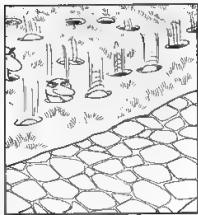
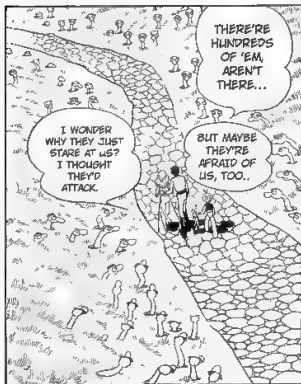
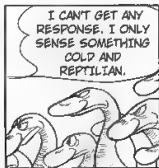


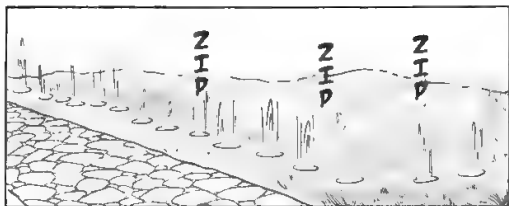


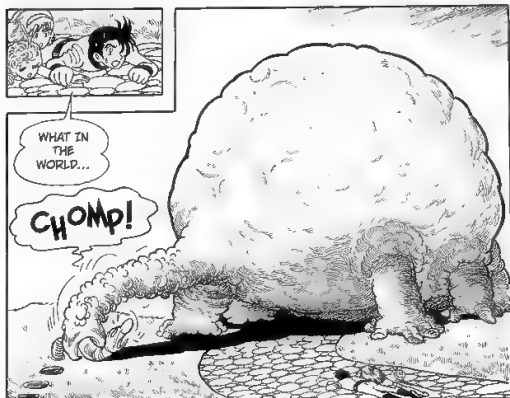
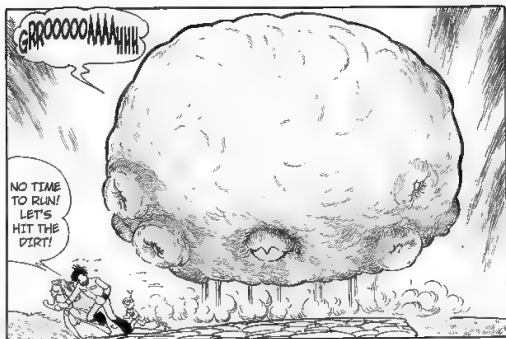


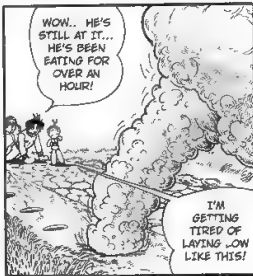
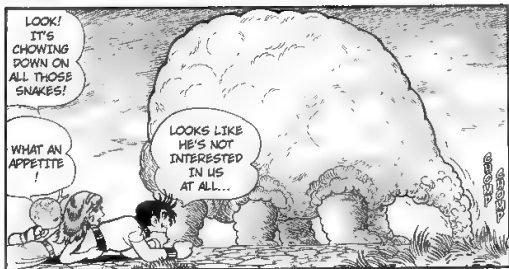
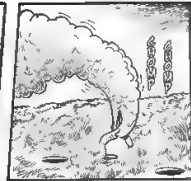


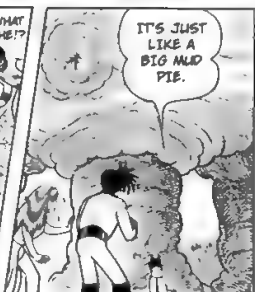
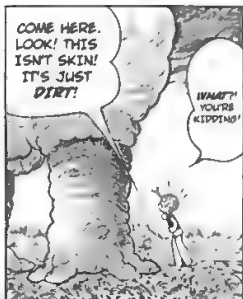


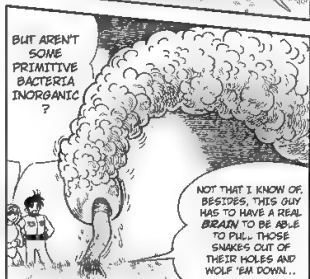
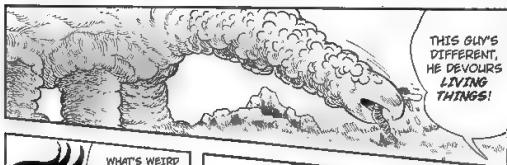
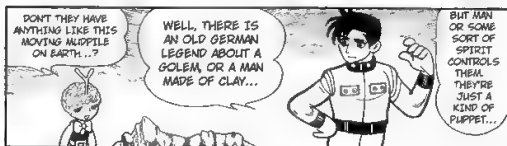
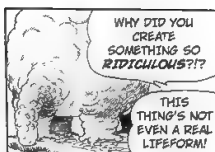
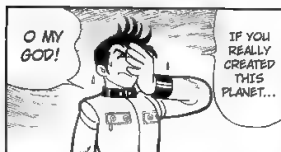


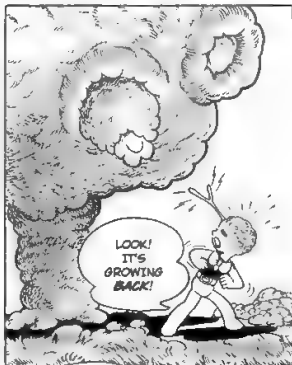
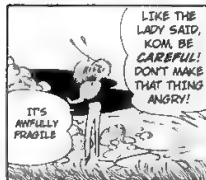
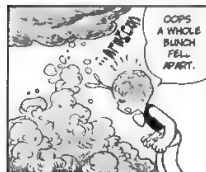
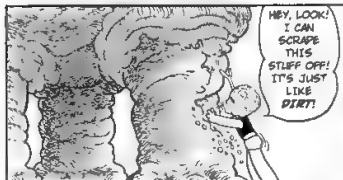


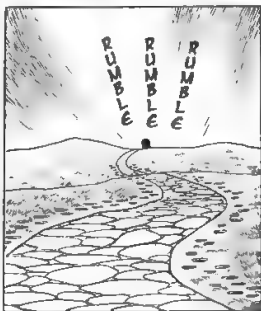
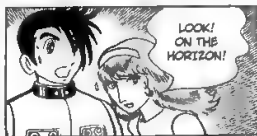
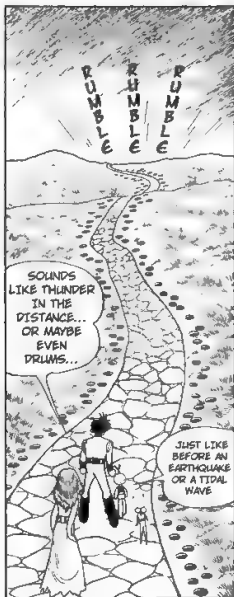


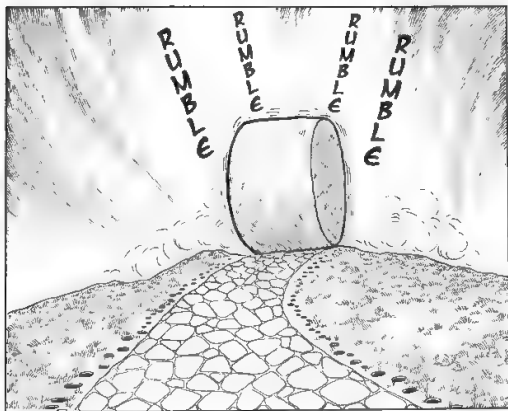


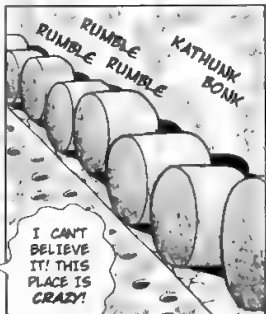






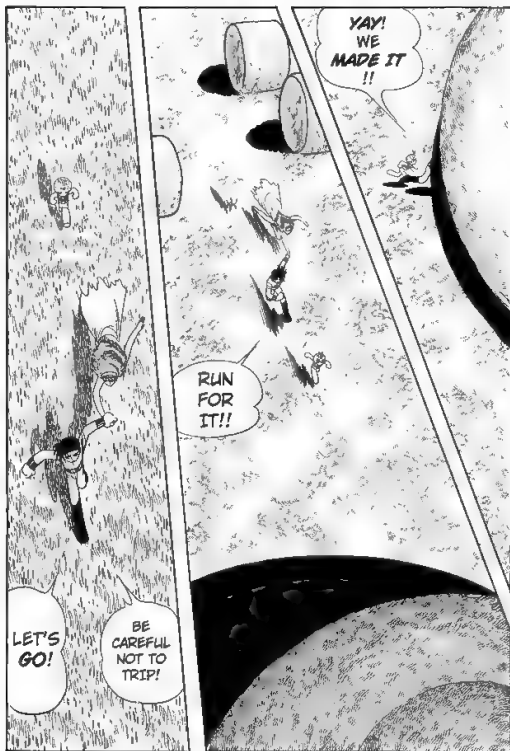


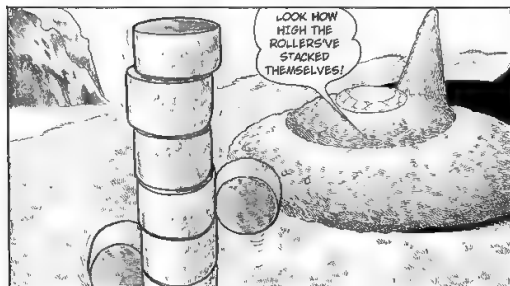
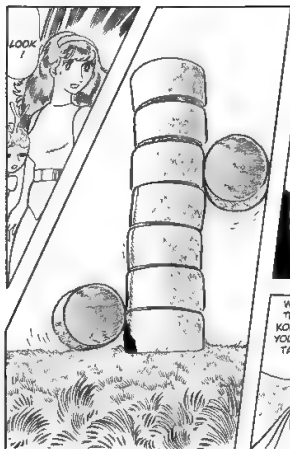


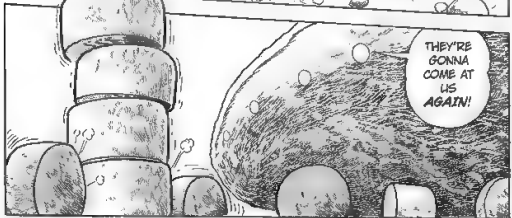
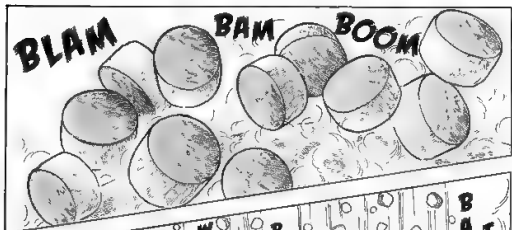


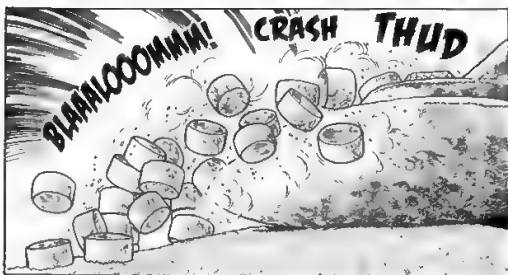
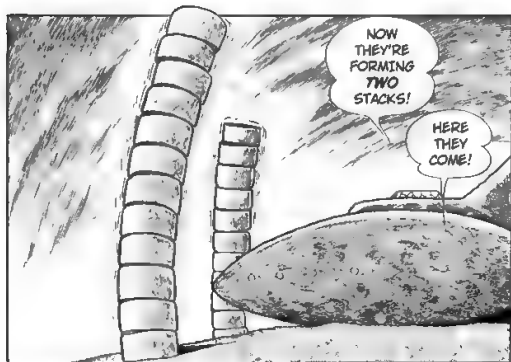


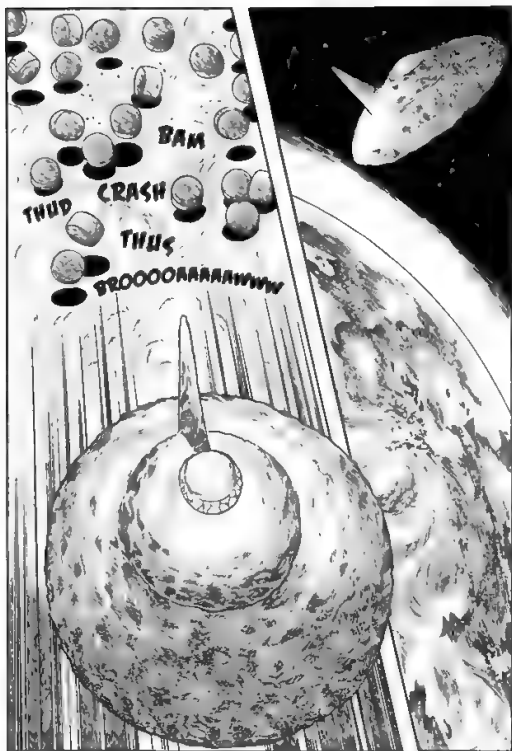


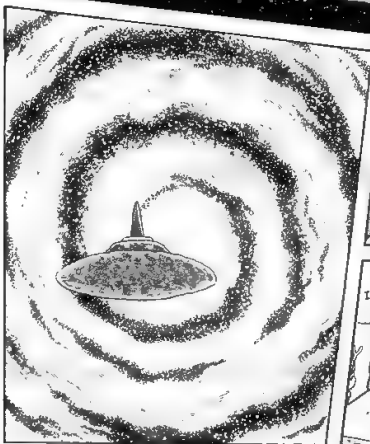


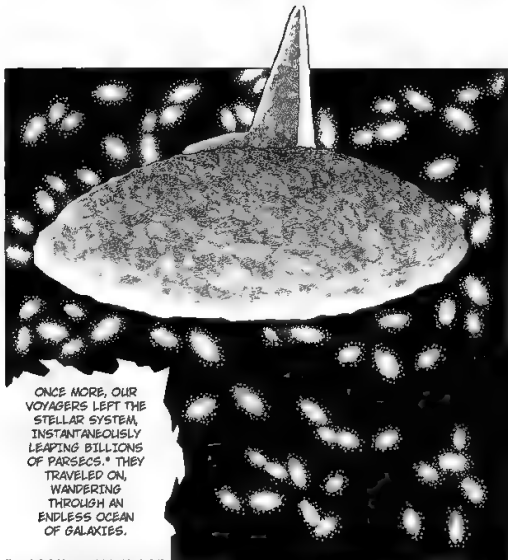












ONCE MORE, OUR VOYAGERS LEFT THE STELLAR SYSTEM, INSTANTANEOUSLY LEAPING BILLIONS OF PARSECS.* THEY TRAVELED ON, WANDERING THROUGH AN ENDLESS OCEAN OF GALAXIES.

(* ONE PARSEC= 3.26 LIGHT YEARS)



WE'VE COME ALL THE WAY TO THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE, AND WE'RE NOT LIKELY TO FIND A PLANET LIKE EARTH HERE.

SO I GIVE UP...

BESIDES, EDEN IS LIKE ANY SECOND HOME... I'M EVEN STARTING TO MISS THE PLACE..

ROMY! HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR FACE, ROMY! IT'S EARTH THAT YOU WANT TO GO HOME TO, NOT EDEN IT!

EARTH? "HOME"? HAH! WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT EARTH, ANYWAY?

I WAS BORN IN WARD 328 OF TOKYO, JAPAN...

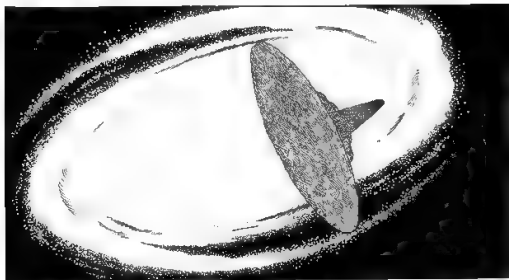
...BUT I NEVER MISS THE PLACE, OR THINK OF GOING BACK...

IT WAS LIKE A PRISON TO ME...

I SPENT THE FIRST SEVENTEEN YEARS OF MY LIFE IN A STERILE GLASS CHAMBER..

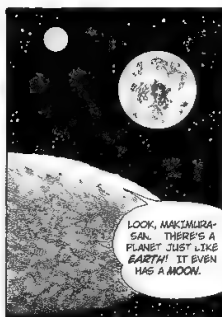
I WAS RAISED AS A SPACE PILOT, SO I LEFT EARTH AS SOON AS I FINISHED TRAINING...







HERE WE
ARE AGAIN..
ANOTHER
SOLAR
SYSTEM
LOOK-
ALIKE.



LOOK, MAKIMURA-
SAN. THERE'S A
PLANET JUST LIKE
EARTH! IT EVEN
HAS A MOON.

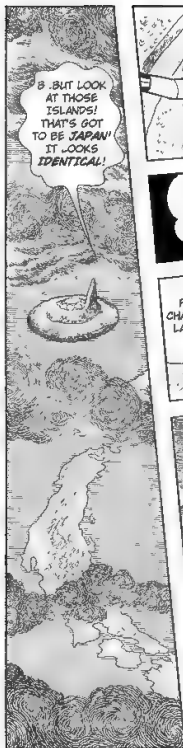


LOOK!
THAT'S THE
NORTH
AMERICAN
CONTINENT
!



MAYBE WE'VE
REALLY MADE IT
TO EARTH THIS
TIME, KOM..

NO WAY
IT'S
EARTH!
GET A
GRIP,
FOLKS!



B...BUT LOOK AT THOSE ISLANDS! THAT'S GOT TO BE JAPAN! IT LOOKS IDENTICAL!



HEY, IN A GALAXY THIS BIG, THERE'S BOUND TO BE ONE PLANET WITH ISLANDS IN THE SHAPE OF JAPAN.

IT'S ALL A MATTER OF PROBABILITY IT'S JUST A COINCIDENCE ..



BUT WHAT IF IT REALLY IS JAPAN!



FAT CHANCE, LADY!

HEY, I'LL EAT MY OWN WORDS IF IT IS...

JUST DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU...



I CAN SEE MT. FUJI!

YOU WHAT?!



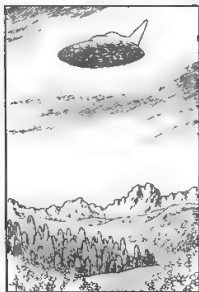
B...BUT
THAT'S **NOT**
POSSIBLE!

WE'RE IN THE
MIDDLE OF
NOWHERE,
BILLIONS OF
PARSECS FROM
OUR OWN GALAXY!

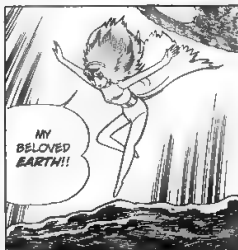


BUT IT
IS
JAPAN!

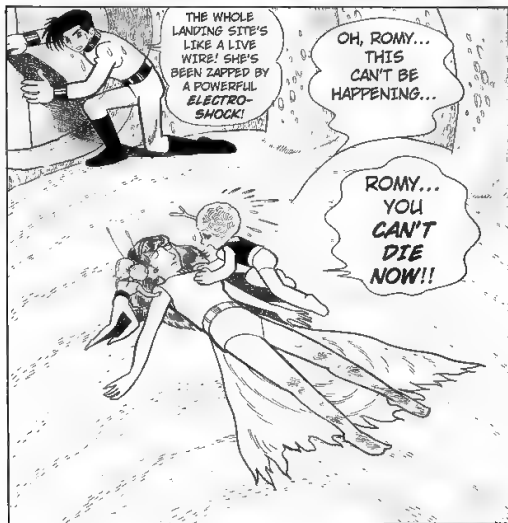
I CAN'T
WAIT TIL
WE LAND!
IT'S
BEAUTIFUL!



CAREFUL,
LADY IT
COULD BE
DANGEROUS!

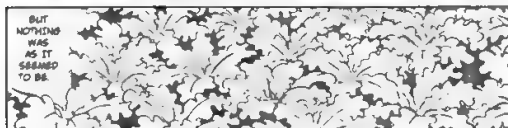


MY
BELOVED
EARTH!!

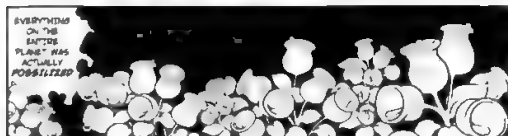




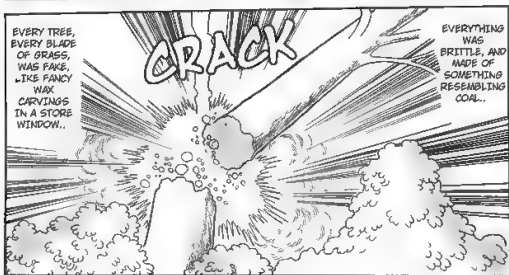
WITH ITS INVITING
"GREENERY" AND WHAT
APPEARED TO BE
ROLLING FIELDS FULL
OF FRUIT AND PRODUCE,
WHO COULD POSSIBLY
HAVE GUESSED THAT
THE PLANET WAS
REALLY LIKE A GIANT
ELECTRIC CHAIR. ?



BUT
NOTHING
WAS
AS IT
SEEMED
TO BE.



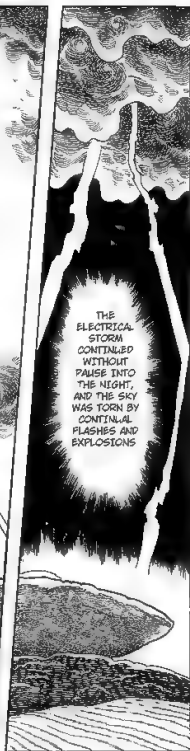
EVERYTHING
ON THE
ENTIRE
PLANET WAS
ACTUALLY
POSSIBLED



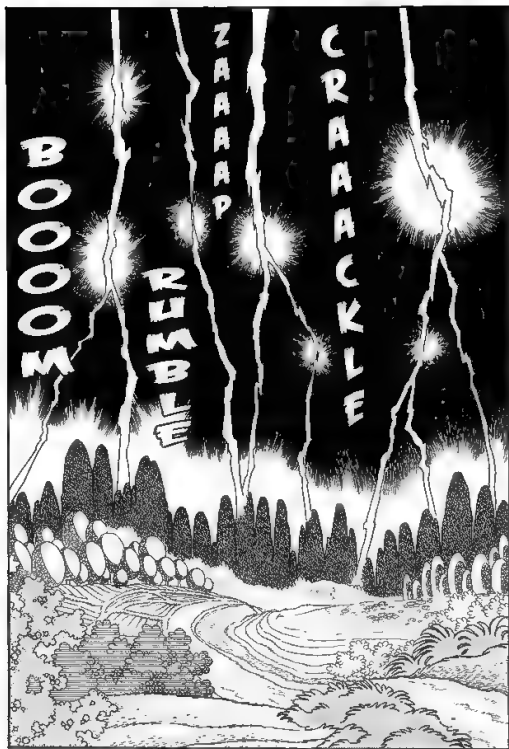


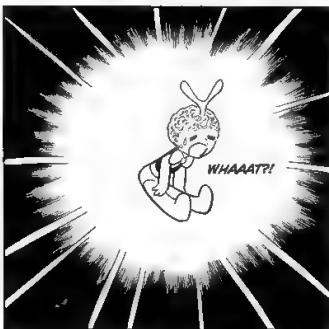
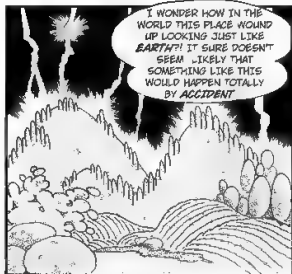
JUST AS ROMY EXITED THE SHIP, A GIANT PURPLE ALIEN HAD FLARED OVER THE PLANET'S MOUNTAINS, TREES AND VALLEYS. THEN, FROM THE SKY, A MASS OF THUNDERBOLTS HAD ASSAULTED THE GROUND MERCILESSLY.

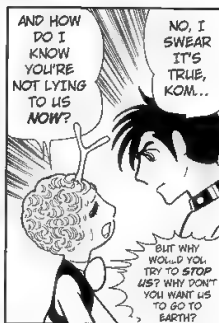
IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS, POOR ROMY HAD FUNCTIONED LIKE A LIGHTNING ROD, WHILE KOM, BEING A SMALLER OBJECT, HAD ESCAPED A DIRECT HIT.



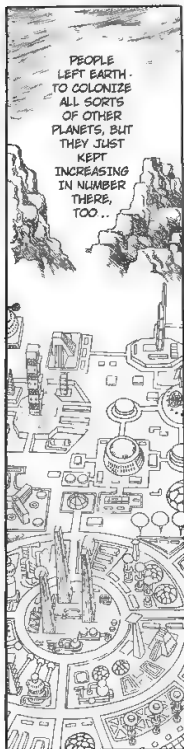
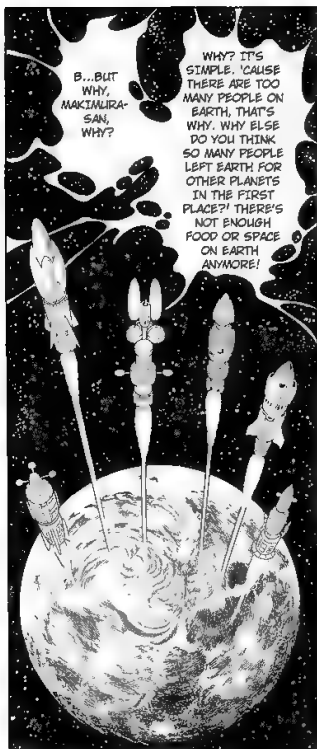
THE ELECTRICAL STORM CONTINUED WITHOUT PAUSE INTO THE NIGHT, AND THE SKY WAS TORN BY CONTINUAL FLASHES AND EXPLOSIONS



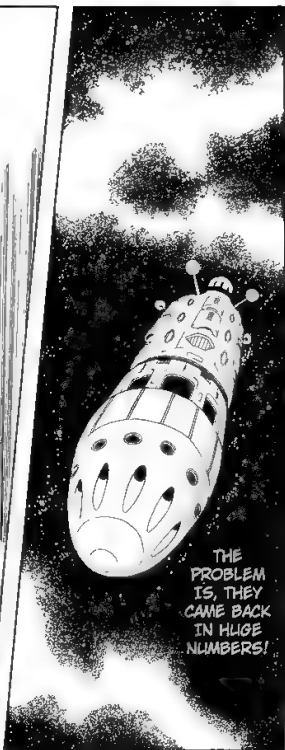
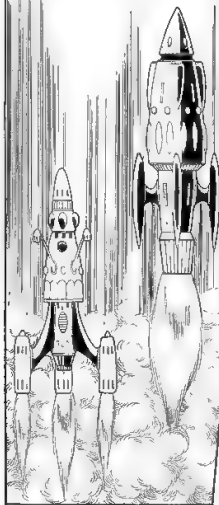




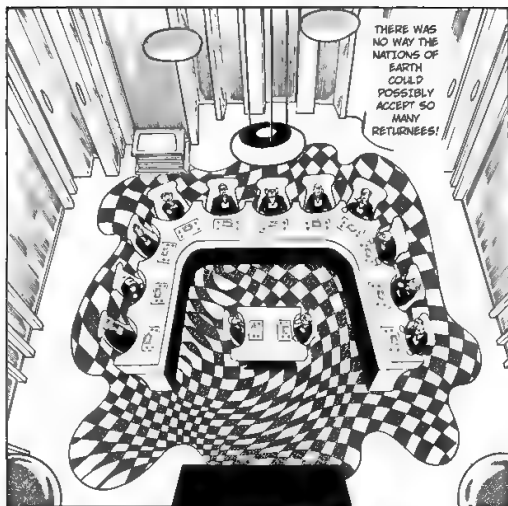




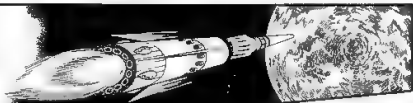
AND AFTER LIVING
IN OUTERSPACE,
THE COLONISTS
EVENTUALLY ALL
BECAME NOSTALGIC
FOR EARTH. THEY
BECAME HOMESICK!
IT'S A NATURAL
REACTION FOR
PEOPLE BORN
THERE, I GUESS...



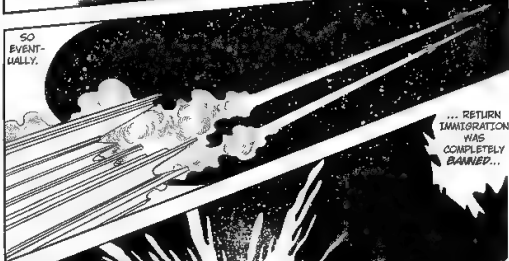
THE
PROBLEM
IS, THEY
CAME BACK
IN HUGE
NUMBERS!



EVEN AFTER
THAT, THOUGH,
MILLIONS OF
COLONISTS
TRIED TO
SNEAK BACK
TO EARTH
ILLEGALLY...



SO
EVENT-
UALLY,



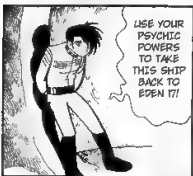
... RETURN
IMMIGRATION
WAS
COMPLETELY
BANNED...

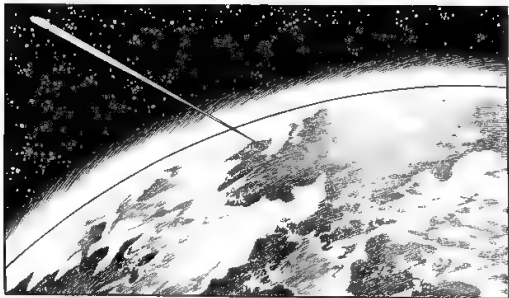
HAVING
ONCE LEFT
EARTH,
PEOPLE
WEREN'T
ALLOWED TO
RETURN
UNDER ANY
CONDITION,
AND IF THEY
TRIED THEY
WERE
DESTROYED





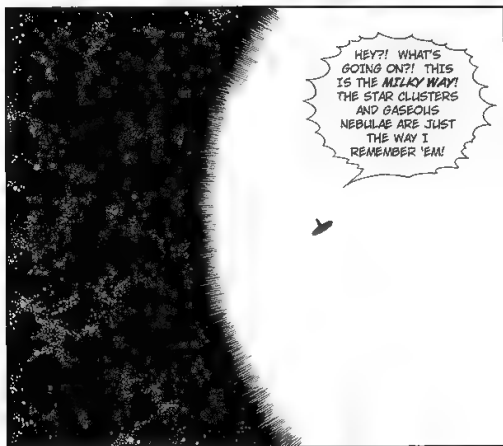
AND
THAT'S
THE
TRUTH,
KOM.

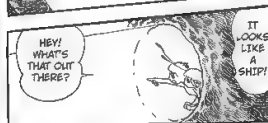
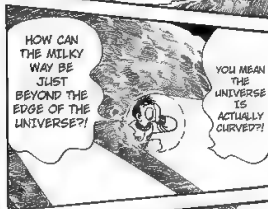
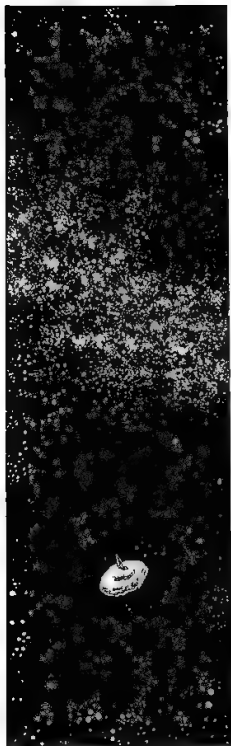




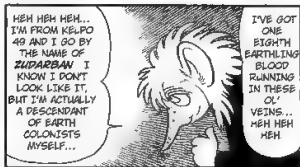
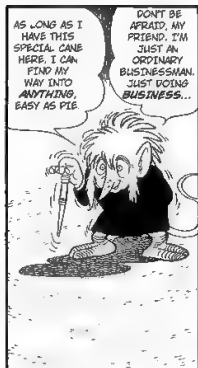


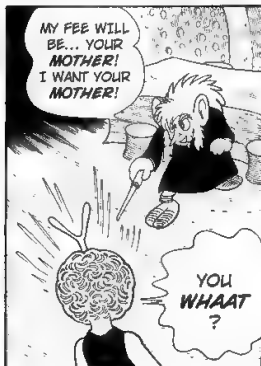
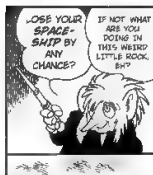
I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO LEAVE POOR ROMY AND KOM ON THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE. SO I HELPED THEM LEAVE THE STRANGE LITTLE PLANET THEY HAD JUST VISITED, AND MOVED THEM CLOSER TO THE REAL EARTH. BY TRAVELING THROUGH DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO MOVE FROM ONE END OF THE COSMOS TO THE OTHER...

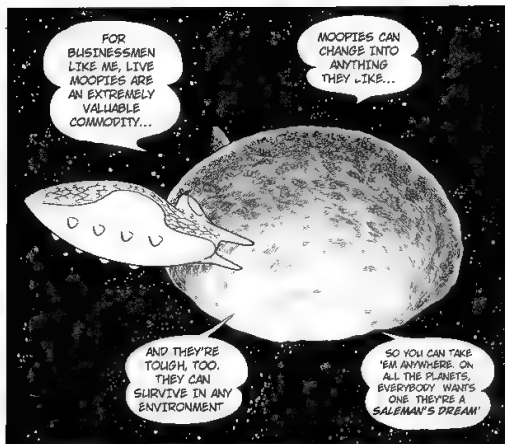




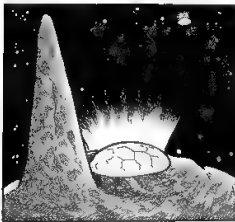
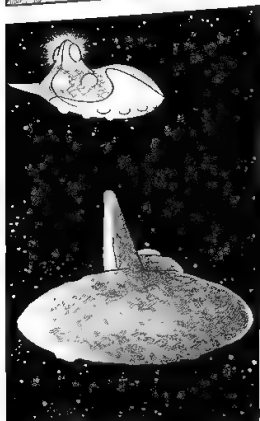


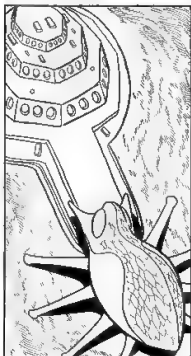


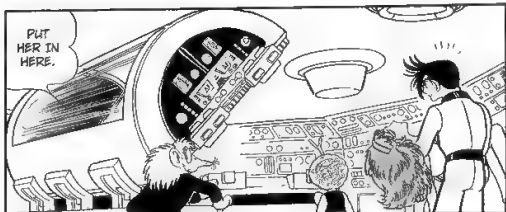
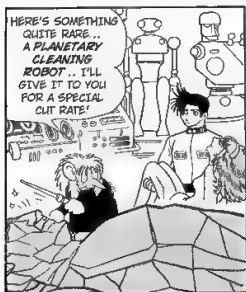
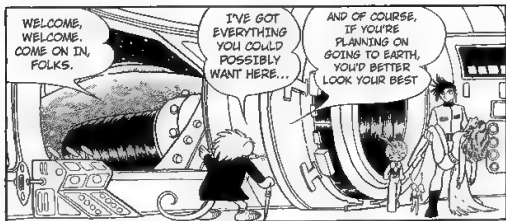


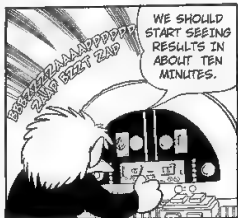
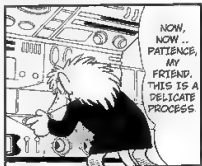
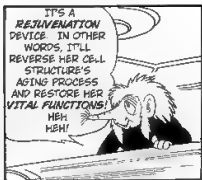
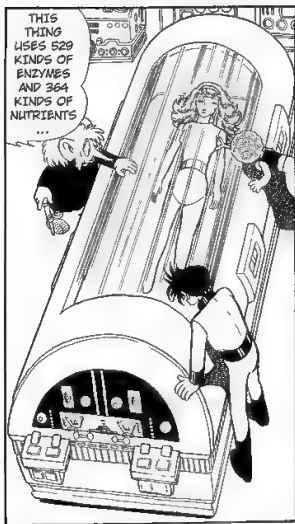




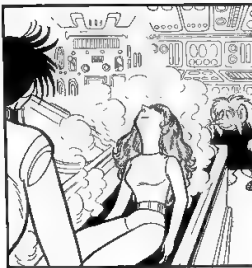
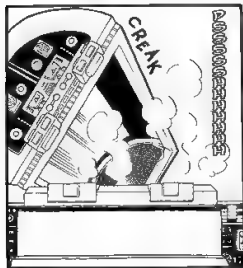


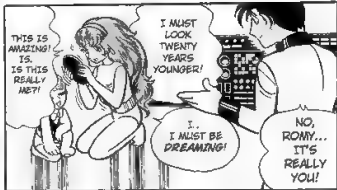
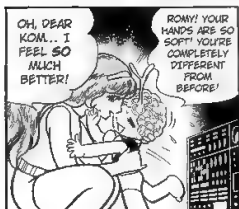
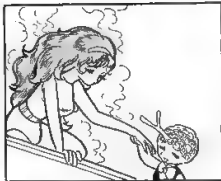
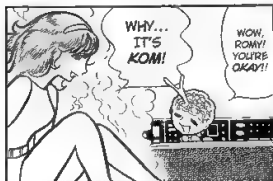














YOU'VE
GOT YOUR
YOUTH
BACK!

MY YOUTH!
I AM YOUNG
AGAIN,
AREN'T I?!
I'VE GOT MY
YOUTH BACK!

AND AS AN
EXTRA BONUS,
EARTH IS JUST
NEXT DOOR,
ROMY!

REALLY
?!

NOW I CAN
RETURN TO
EARTH AS A
YOUNG
WOMAN!

THIS IS
WONDERFUL!
I CAN'T
BELIEVE IT!

WHERE?

WHICH
PLANET
IS IT?!

WHICH
ONE'S
EARTH?!

HA HA... WELL,
YOU CAN'T SEE
IT YET, BUT
THAT'S THE SUN
OVER THERE...
SEE IT
SHINING?!



THAT'S THE
SUN?! YOU MEAN
MY HOME'S
RIGHT NEXT TO
THAT STAR?!



I CAN'T
BELIEVE
THIS! I'M
SO HAPPY!

EARTH'S
RIGHT IN
FRONT OF
US!!

SOON I'LL BE ABLE
TO SEE GREEN
MOUNTAINS AND
BLUE SEAS!



LISTEN,
ZUDARBHAN

IF YOU'VE GOT A
RE-JUVENATION
TECHNIQUE FOR ROMY,
MAYBE YOU'VE ALSO
GOT SOMETHING I
NEED, TOO.

AND
WHAT
ABOUT
THAT
BET?



WELL, I
NEED AN
IMMORTAL
BODY.. ONE
THAT DOESN'T
DIE!

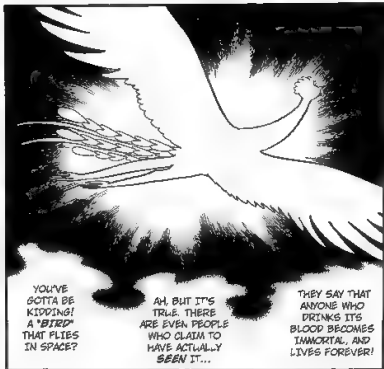
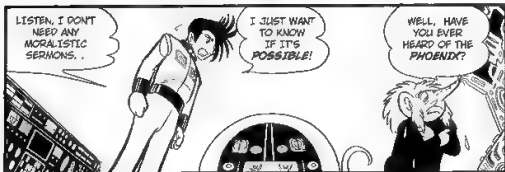
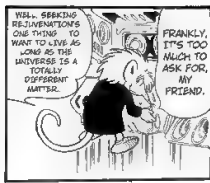
WORKING AS A
SPACE PILOT,
SOMETIMES THE
SCALE OF TIME
IN THE UNIVERSE
MAKES ME
FEEL SO INSIG-
NIFICANT...

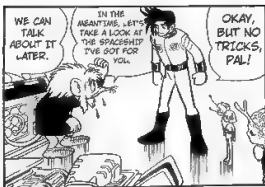


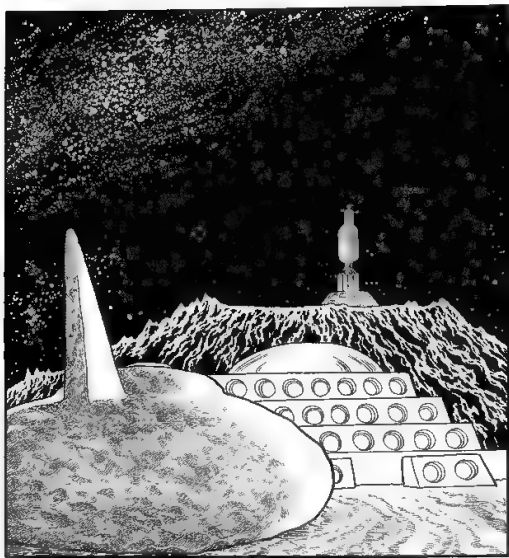
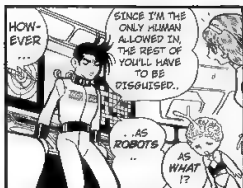
I WANT TO LIVE AS
LONG AS THE
UNIVERSE. THERE
MUST BE SOMETHING
TO MAKE THAT
POSSIBLE,
NO?

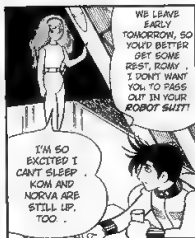
WELL, I
CAN'T SAY
THERE
ISN'T...

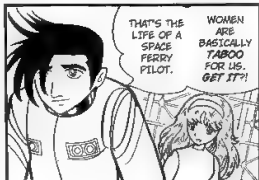
BUT
...

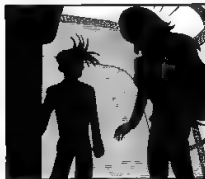




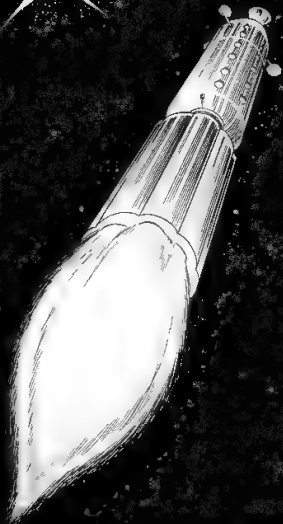


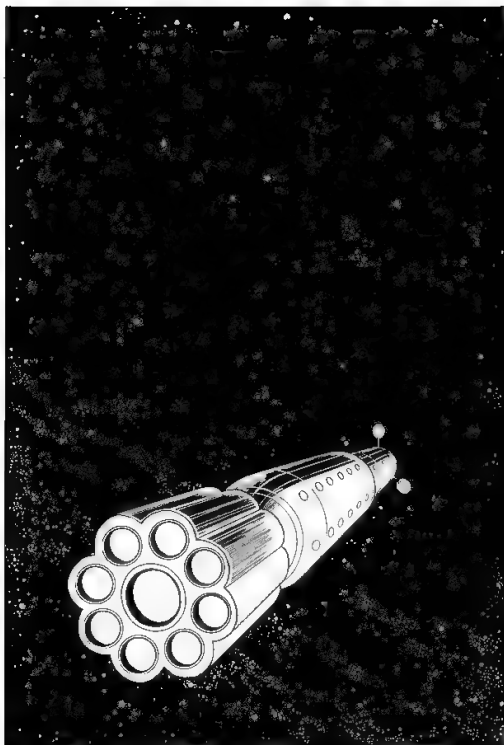




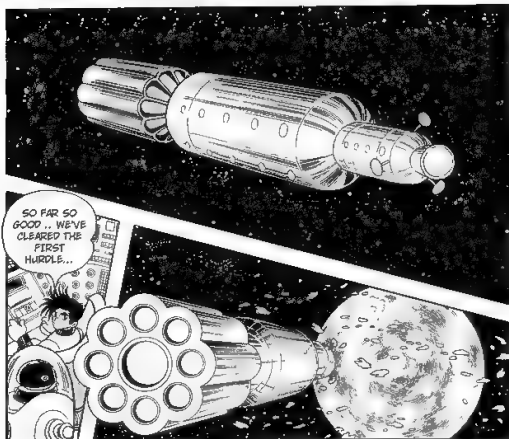
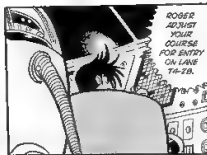
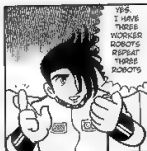
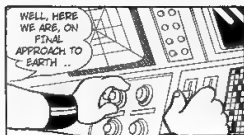


THE NEXT
MORNING,
MAKIMURA TOOK
OFF IN HIS NEW
SPACESHIP,
THIS TIME
HEADED FOR THE
REAL EARTH. THE
CREW ALSO
INCLUDED
WHAT APPEARED
TO BE THREE
ROBOTS..





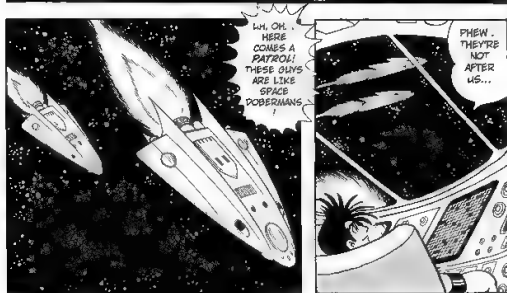






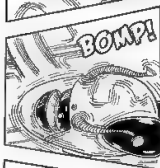
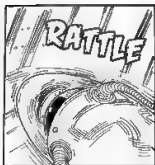
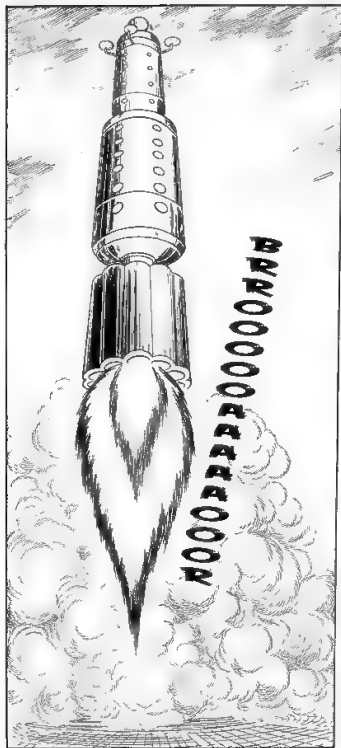
HMPH..
MORE
SPACE
WRECK-
AGE...

THIS IS WHERE
MOST OF THE
COLONISTS
TRYING TO
SNEAK ONTO
EARTH ARE
CAUGHT BY
PATROLS



WH, OH..
HERE
COMES A
PATROL!
THESE GUYS
ARE LIKE
SPACE
DOBERMANS!

PHEW..
THEY'RE
NOT
AFTER
US...



I'M READY TO GET
OUT ALREADY!
I CAN'T STAND
BEING INSIDE
THIS ROBOT
SHELL!

SHH! BE
QUIET RONY.
SOMEONE'S
COMING!

BZZZZZZZZ

JUST THREE
ROBOTS IN THE
HOLD THIS TIME.
LET'S SEND TWO
OF 'EM OUT.

WHADYA
WANT
ME TO DO
WITH
THOSE
ROBOTS?

YOU CAN JUST
PUT 'EM IN A
ROBOT
WAREHOUSE..

SO WHEN
ARE YOU
TAKING
OFF NEXT?

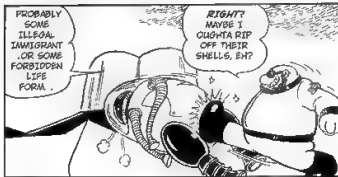
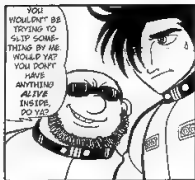
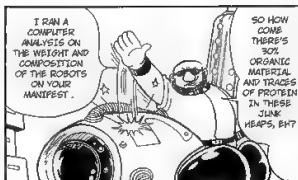
HOPE-
FULLY,
IN ABOUT
THREE
DAYS..

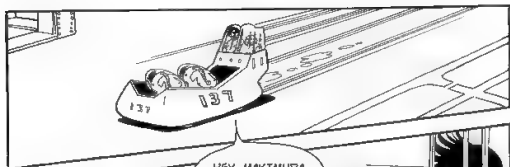
SAY,
MAKIMURA

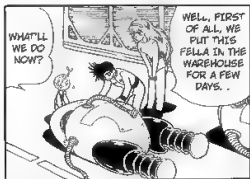
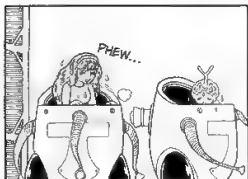
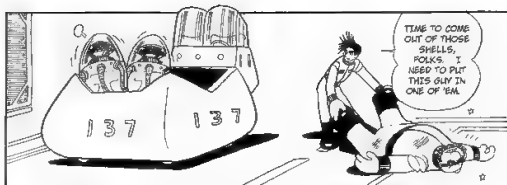
WELL, IF
IT ISN'T
MAKIMURA!
COME BACK TO
EARTH BH?
'MEMBER ME,
KONJO?
THOUGHT I'D
NEVER SEE YOU
AGAIN..

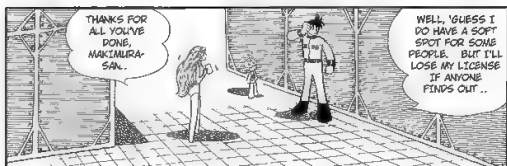
I HAD AN
ACCIDENT
AND HAD
TO TURN
BACK..

YOU'RE NOT
TRYING TO
PULL A FAST
ONE ON ME,
ARE YA?











HE SAID THE
REJUVENATION
PROCESS HAS
A **SIDE
EFFECT!**

..THAT MAKING
YOU YOUNGER
PUTS UNDUE
STRESS ON
YOUR CELL
STRUCTURE...

THAT AS A
RESULT YOU'LL
AGE FASTER
THAN EVER, AND
DIE IN THREE
DAYS...

TWO DAYS HAVE
ALREADY PASSED
SINCE WE LANDED,
SO THAT MEANS
YOU'VE ONLY GOT
ONE DAY LEFT .





NO!
NOT
NOW!!

NOT AFTER YOU'VE
COME SO FAR
AND BEEN THROUGH
SO MUCH, RONY!
HOW CAN YOU HAVE
ONLY ONE MORE
DAY TO LIVE??
IT'S NOT FAIR!



IT'S NOT
RIGHT... IT'S
NOT *RIGHT*,
RONY...



BUT MAYBE
IT'S BEST
THIS WAY,
KOM...

I ALWAYS
DREAMED
OF BEING
ABLE
TO RETURN
TO EARTH
ONE DAY...

I
DREAMED
OF IT
FOR
SUCH A
LONG
TIME.



SO IF I DO DIE
HERE, I'LL AT
LEAST DIE
SATISFIED...

POOR
KOM, IT'S
YOU THAT
I'M MORE
WORRIED
ABOUT



YOU'VE DONE
EVERYTHING
POSSIBLE TO
LEAD ME BACK
TO EARTH...

BUT YOUR
LIFE
DOESN'T
END HERE...
YOU HAVE
TO GO BACK
TO EDEN IF
FOR ME...



THERE'S NO POINT IN TALKING TOO MUCH, RONY. YOU DON'T HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

...WITH ONLY ONE DAY LEFT, YOU'D BETTER MAKE THE MOST OF IT



COME BACK HERE IN THREE DAYS, KOM, AND I'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO YOUR PLANET..



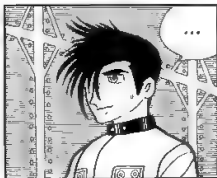
I'LL BE HERE IN THE BARRACKS ON THIS BASE.

IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU NEED, CALL ME...



AND ONE OTHER THING. . TELL KOM TO LET ME KNOW WHERE YOU SPEND YOUR LAST HOURS TOMORROW .

I NEED TO KNOW WHERE... BECAUSE I DON'T INTEND TO ABANDON YOUR BODY THERE...

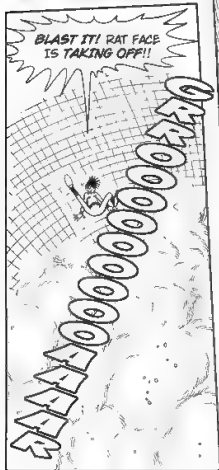
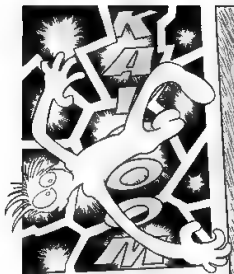


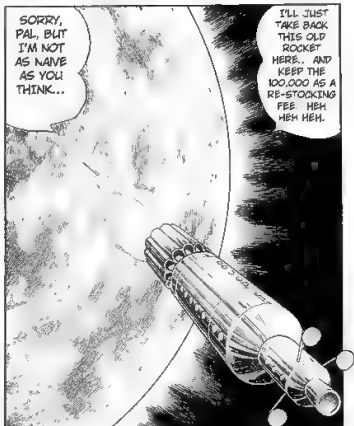
...

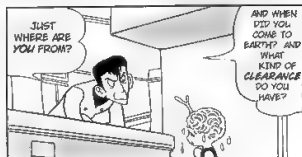
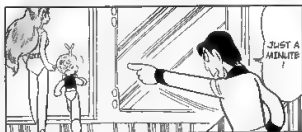
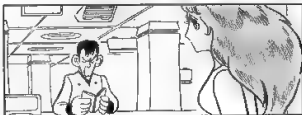
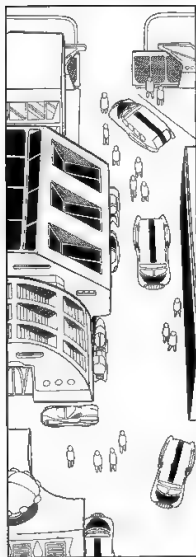
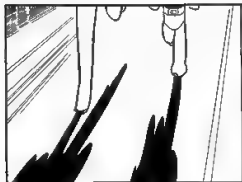


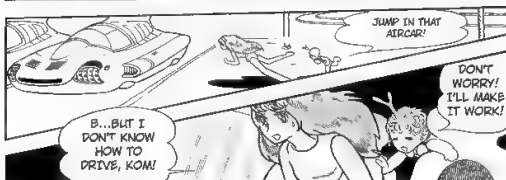
I'D BETTER GO CHECK ON THAT ONE LAST "ROBOT"...

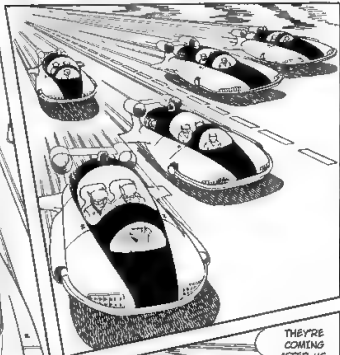
COME TO THINK OF IT I WONDER WHAT THAT RAT-FACE GUY'S UP TO ?

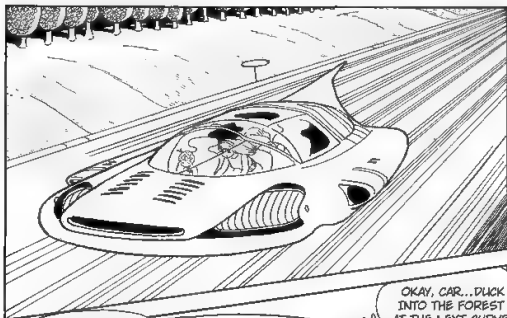






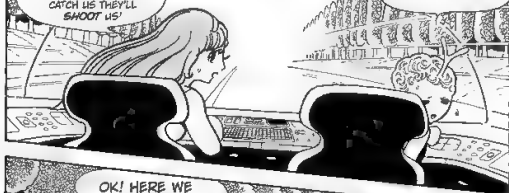




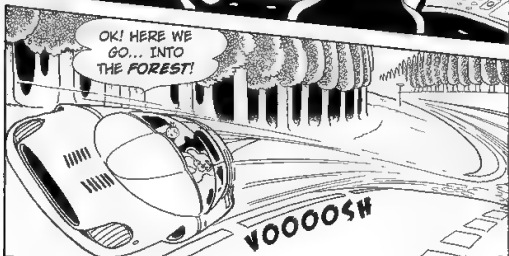


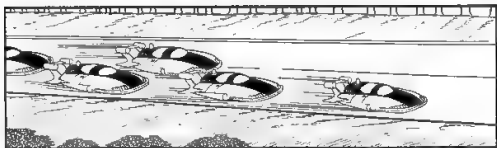
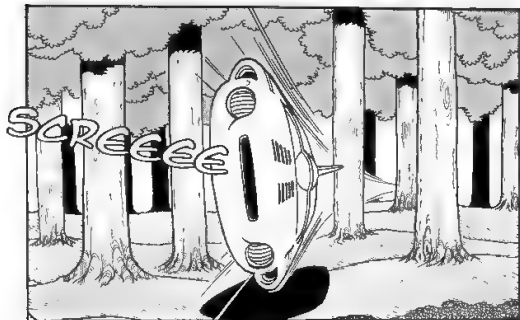
THEY'RE AIRPORT
POLICE, KOM! IF THEY
CATCH US THEY'LL
SHOOT US!

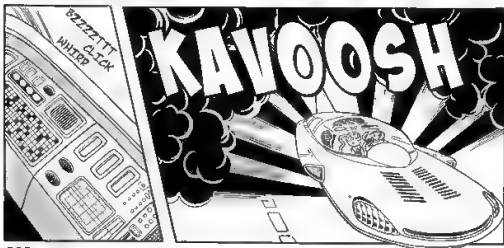
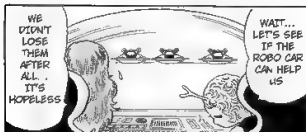
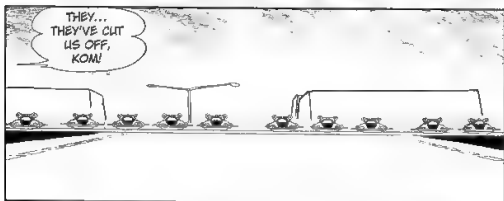
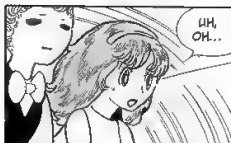
OKAY, CAR...DUCK
INTO THE FOREST
AT THE NEXT CURVE
AND LOSE THEM!



OK! HERE WE
GO... INTO
THE FOREST!









WOW!
THIS ROBOT
CAR REALLY
FOLLOWS
ORDERS!

BUT THEY'LL
STILL FIND US
EVENTUALLY,
KOH, AND KILL
US!



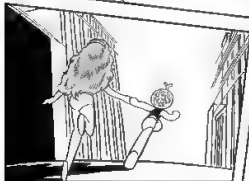
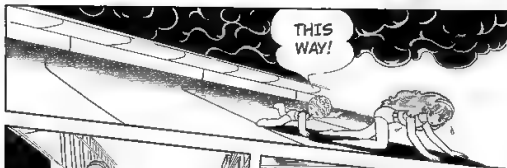
WE'RE
GETTING
OUT?

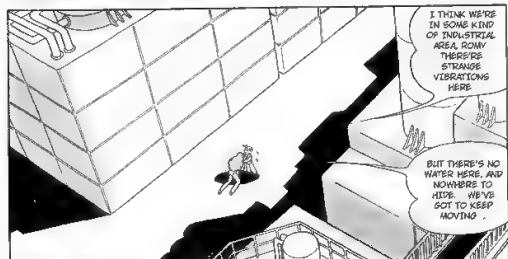
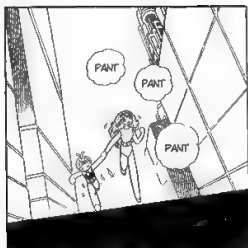
YES, BUT
WE'LL LET
THE CAR
KEEP
FLYING!



KEEP
FLYING
STRAIGHT,
OKAY?!

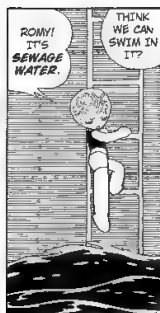
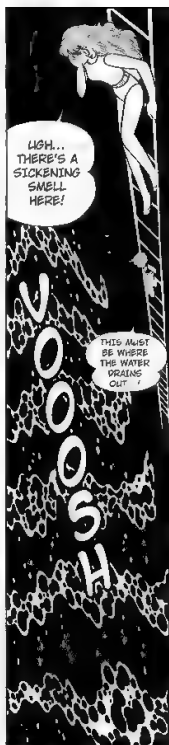




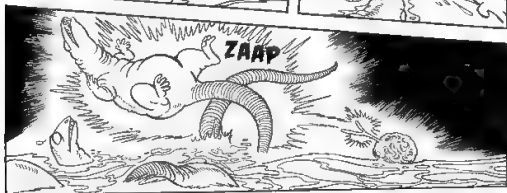
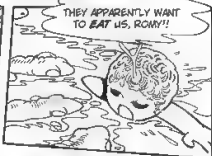


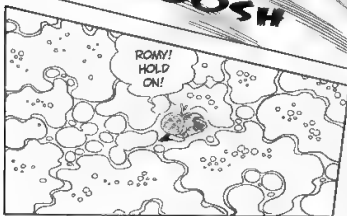
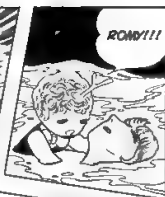


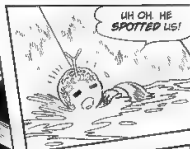
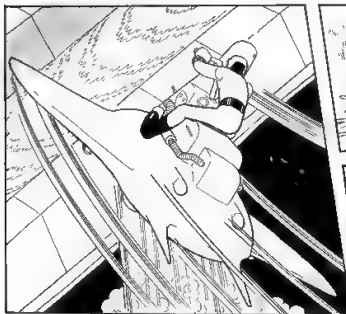
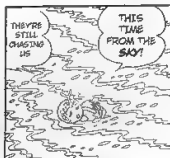
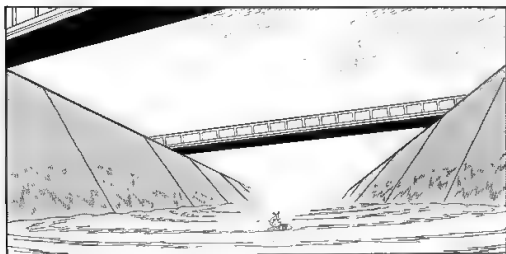
ROMY

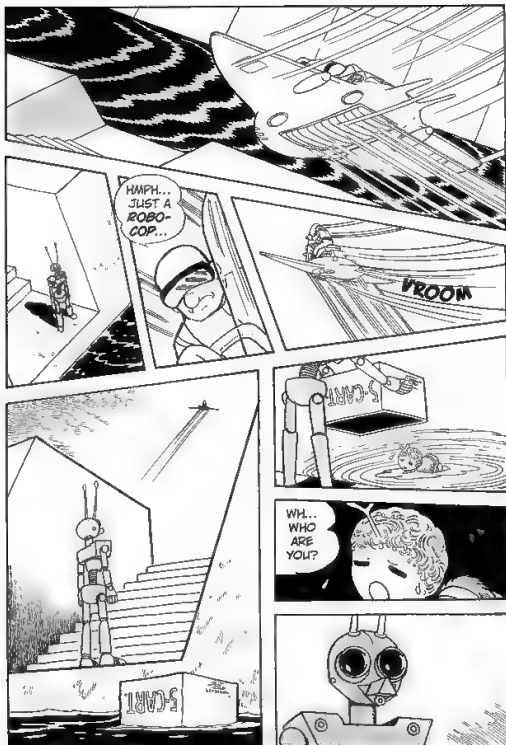


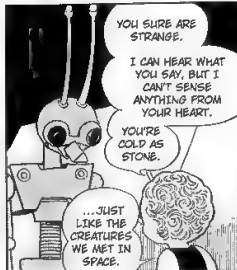
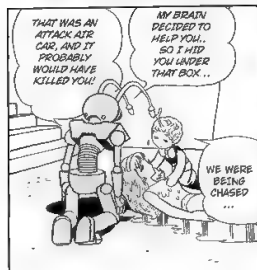
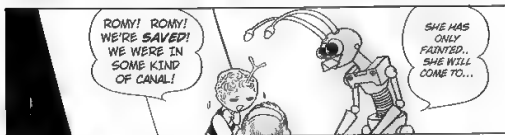
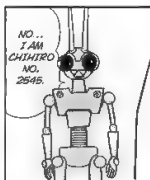


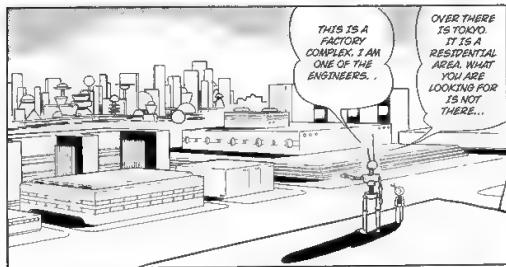
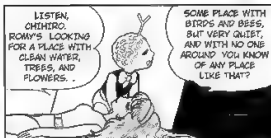
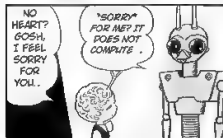
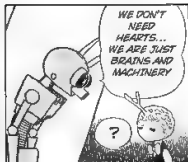


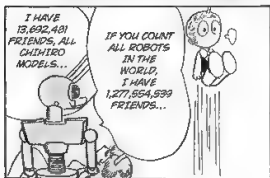
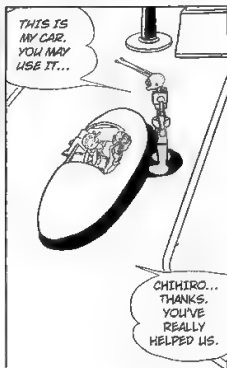
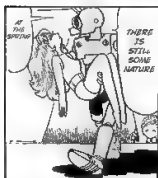
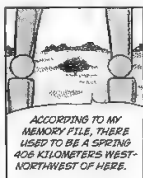
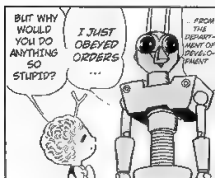
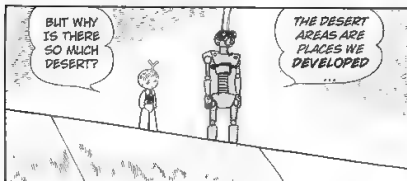


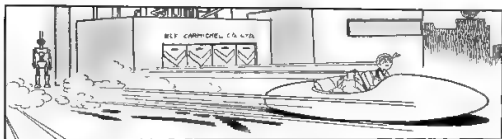










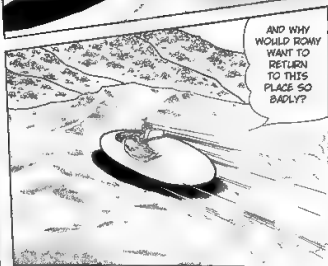
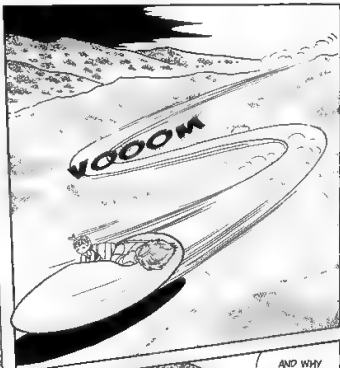


I JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND
I JUST
DON'T

HOW CAN HUMANS MAKE
1.2 BILLION ROBOTS
LIKE CHIHIRO, AND
STILL TRY TO KEEP
THEIR OWN KIND FROM
RETURNING FROM
THE STARS?

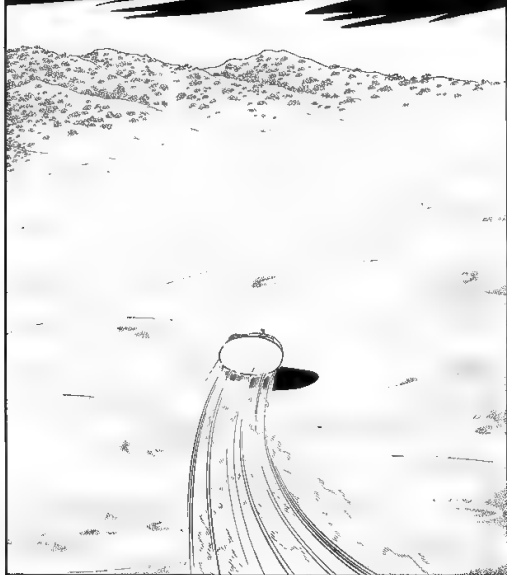
WHY IS A ROBOT
WITHOUT A HEART,
LIKE CHIHIRO, SO
KIND TO US, WHILE
ALL THE HUMANS TRY
TO KILL US?

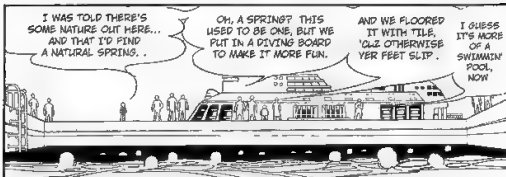
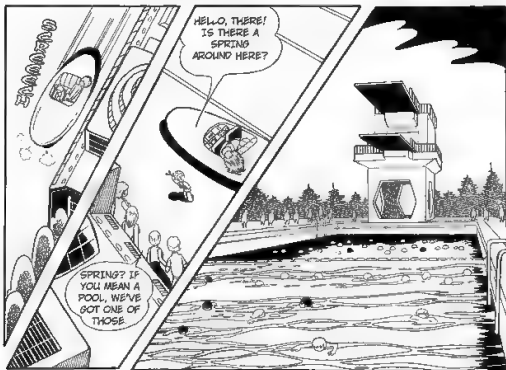
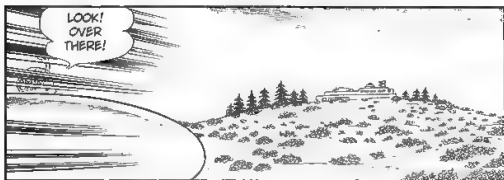
I GUESS I
JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND
EARTH AT ALL.

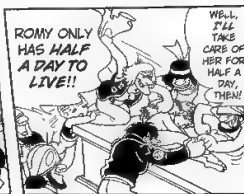
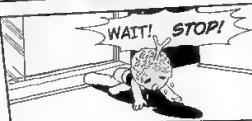
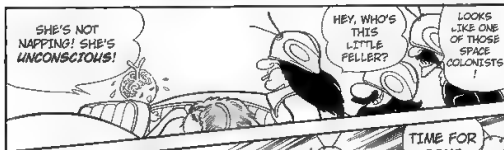
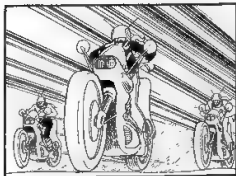


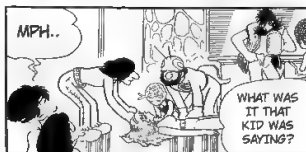
AND WHY
WOULD RONY
WANT TO
RETURN
TO THIS
PLACE SO
BADLY?

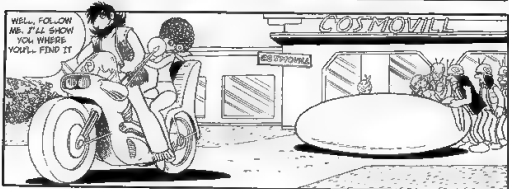
THE PAIR CONTINUED ON AND ON, WITH NOTHING MORE THAN A VAST WASTELAND BEFORE THEM. WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN A PEACEFUL LAND OF PRETTY BIRDS AND ANIMALS, WAS NOW A BARREN DESERT, CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING LITTLE MORE THAN THE OCCASIONAL FLY, ANT OR MILLIPEDE.

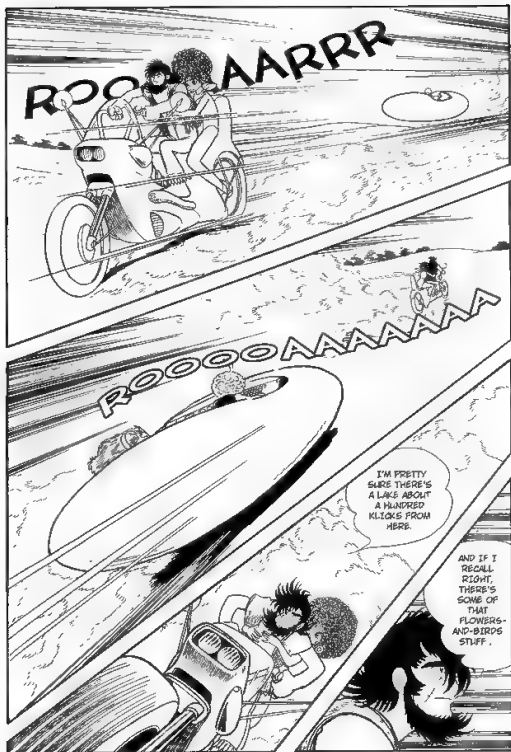


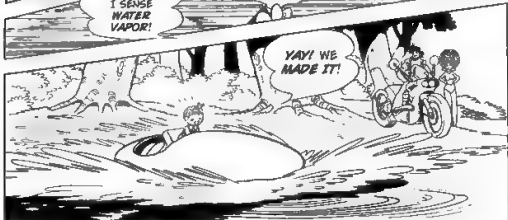


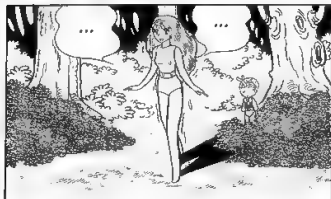
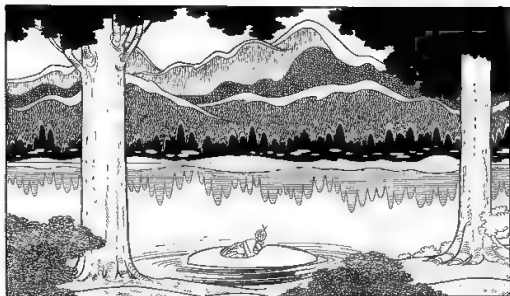


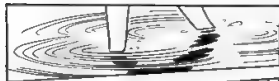


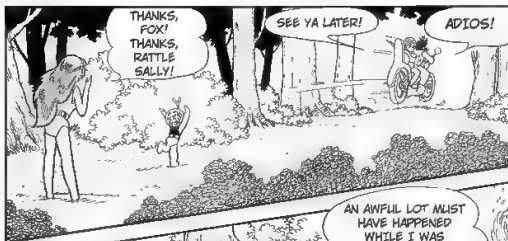








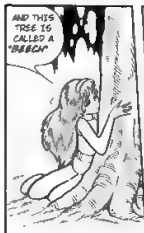


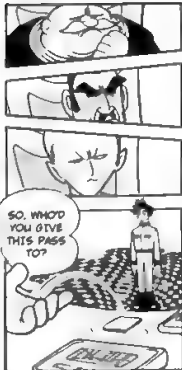
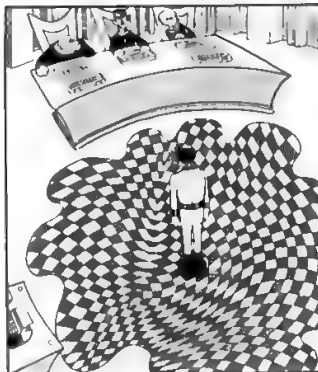


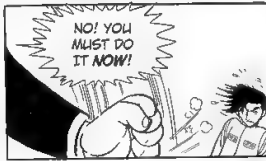


YOU'RE RIGHT,
KOM! THOSE
ARE *BIRDS*
SINGING!

THEY'RE
LITTLE
FINCHES!



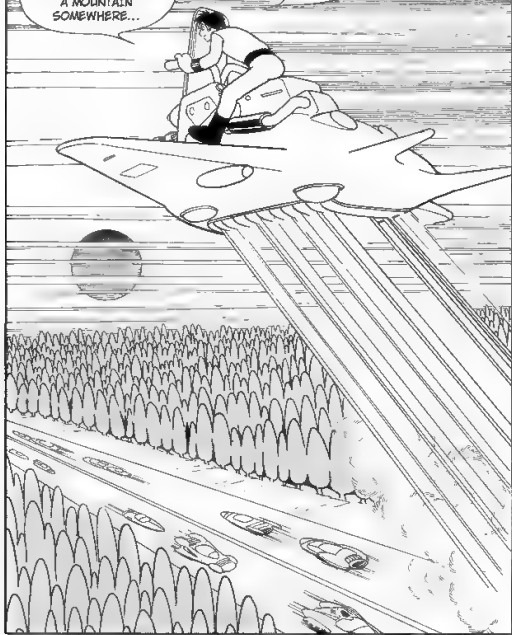


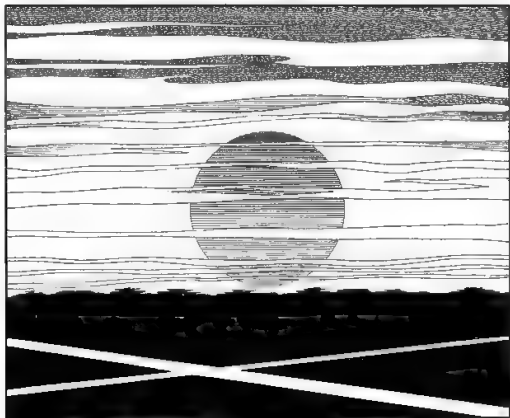


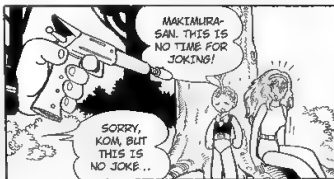


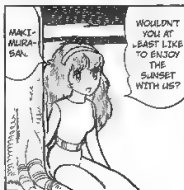
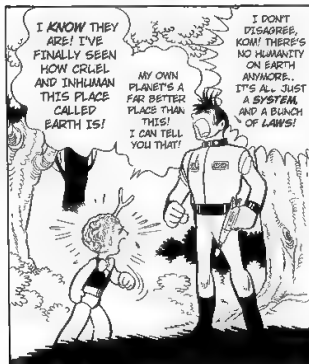
ROMY'S
PROBABLY
SPENDING HER
LAST MINUTES
NEXT TO A LAKE
AT THE FOOT OF
A MOUNTAIN
SOMEWHERE...

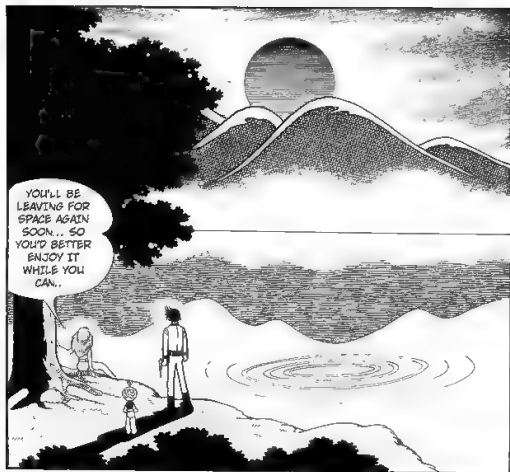
I'LL JUST
HAVE TO
CHECK
EVERY PLACE
I CAN...

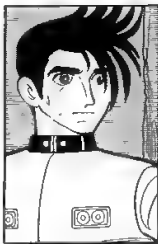
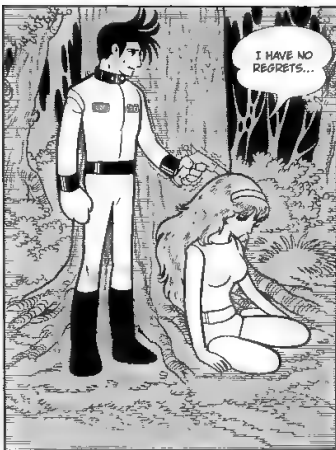




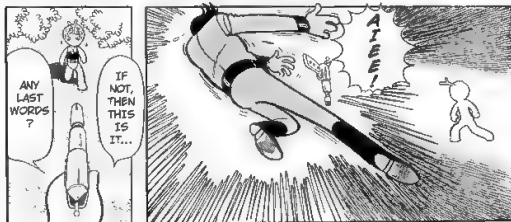
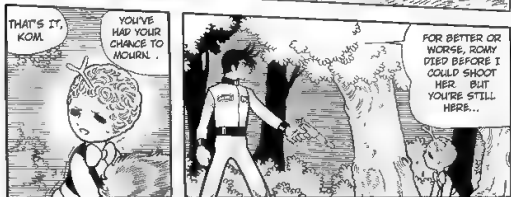
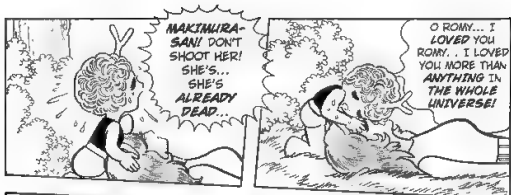




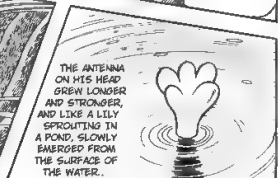
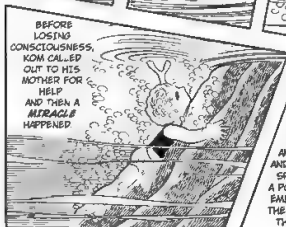
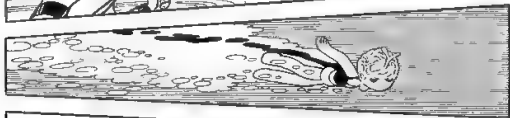


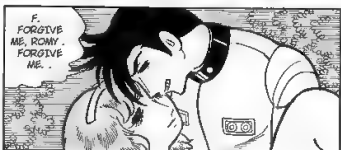




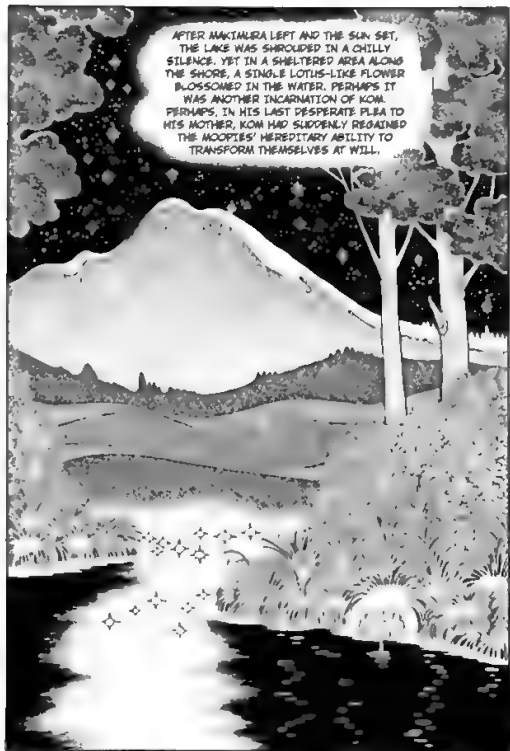


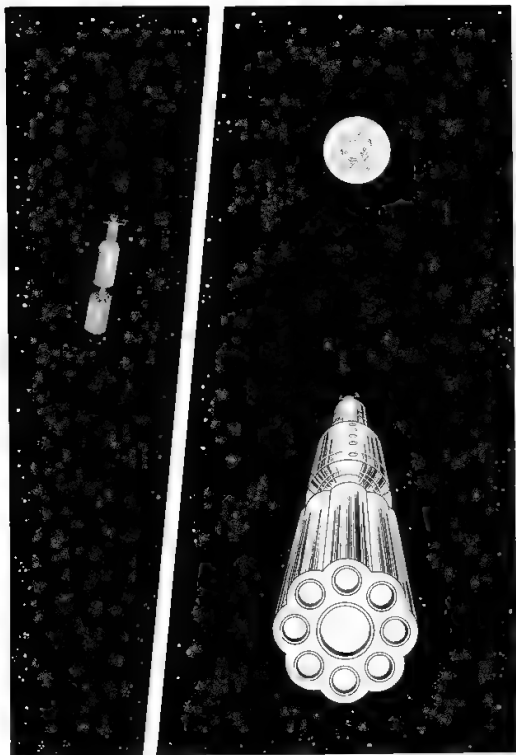


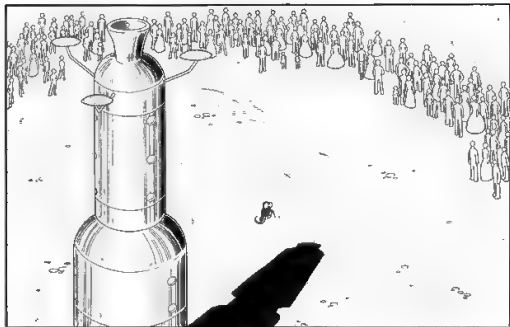




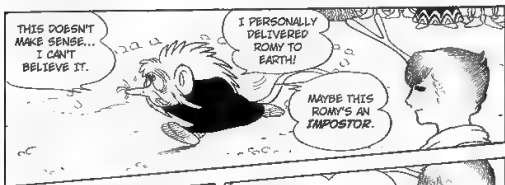
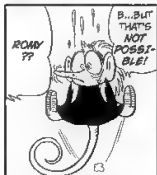
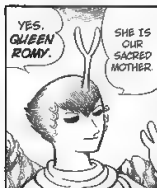
AFTER MAKIMURA LEFT AND THE SUN SET, THE LAKE WAS SHROUDED IN A CHILLY SILENCE. YET IN A SHELTERED AREA ALONG THE SHORE, A SINGLE LOTUS-LIKE FLOWER BLOSSOMED IN THE WATER. PERHAPS IT WAS ANOTHER INCARNATION OF KOM. PERHAPS, IN HIS LAST DESPERATE PLEA TO HIS MOTHER, KOM HAD SUDDENLY REGAINED THE MOOPIES' HEREDITARY ABILITY TO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES AT WILL.









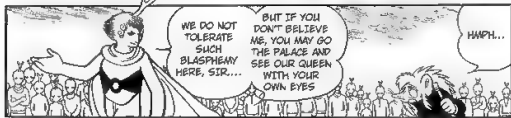




MOOPIES CAN CHANGE THEMSELVES INTO ANYTHING. SO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIGHLY CONVENIENT TO HAVE ONE STAND IN FOR ROMY IN HER ABSENCE

I'LL BET ANYTHING A MOOPIE TOOK ROMY'S PLACE AND HAS BEEN POSTING AS THE QUEEN EVER SINCE

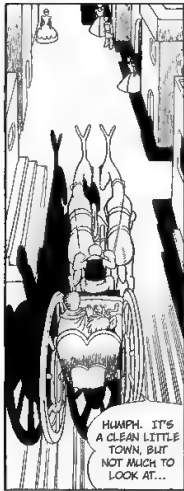
TAKE ME TO THE PALACE, MR. MAYOR!



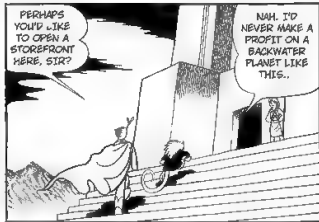
WE DO NOT TOLERATE SUCH BLASPHEMY HERE, SIR....

BUT IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, YOU MAY GO THE PALACE AND SEE OUR QUEEN WITH YOUR OWN EYES

HMPH...



HUMPH. IT'S A CLEAN LITTLE TOWN, BUT NOT MUCH TO LOOK AT...



PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO OPEN A STOREFRONT HERE, SIR?

NAH. I'D NEVER MAKE A PROFIT ON A BACKWATER PLANET LIKE THIS..



MR. MAYOR... WHAT A SURPRISE ...

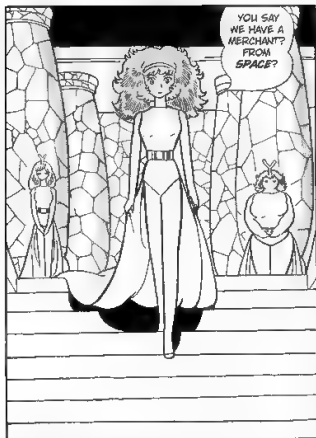
THIS IS A MERCHANT FROM SPACE..

HE'S HERE TO SEE QUEEN...



WELL, WELL. IF IT ISN'T SOOCH..

YOU LOOK AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER, YOUR MAJESTY





TELL ME, SODOM,
WHAT IS THE TRUE
PURPOSE OF THIS
IMPERTINENT
LITTLE MAN'S
VISIT?

HE SAYS
HE WANTS
PERMISSION
TO HUNT
MOOPIES,
MAJESTY...

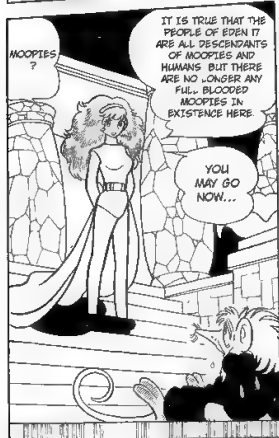
OWW
...



MOOPIES
?

IT IS TRUE THAT THE
PEOPLE OF EDEN IT
ARE ALL DESCENDANTS
OF MOOPIES AND
HUMANS BUT THERE
ARE NO LONGER ANY
FULL BLOODED
MOOPIES IN
EXISTENCE HERE.

YOU
MAY GO
NOW...



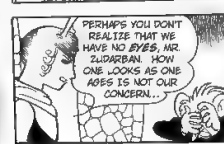
W..WAIT I'M SURE
THERE ARE! I MET
A BOY CALLED KOM
WHOSE MOTHER WAS
A REAL MOOPIE!



MR. MAYOR. WHY CAN'T
YOU SEE THE TRUTH?
SURELY YOU KNOW
VERY WELL THAT UNTIL
RECENTLY YOUR QUEEN
LOOKED MUCH OLDER?



PERHAPS YOU DON'T
REALIZE THAT WE
HAVE NO EYES, MR.
ZUDARBAN. HOW
ONE LOOKS AS ONE
AGES IS NOT OUR
CONCERN...





WELL, THEN, YOUR MAJESTY, IF YOU ARE TRULY AN EARTH-LING, PERHAPS YOU TELL ME SOMETHING OF YOUR HOME PLANET?

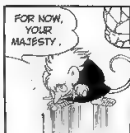


OF COURSE, I USED TO LIVE ON A SMALL ISLAND IN A COUNTRY CALLED JAPAN. I MET A MAN, FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM, AND FLED HERE WITH HIM...

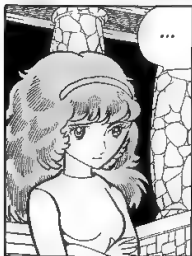
AFTER MANY HARDSHIPS, I GAVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND I NAMED HIM 'GAIN.'



SO, IS MY IDENTITY CONFIRMED?



FOR NOW, YOUR MAJESTY...



...



WELL, DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?

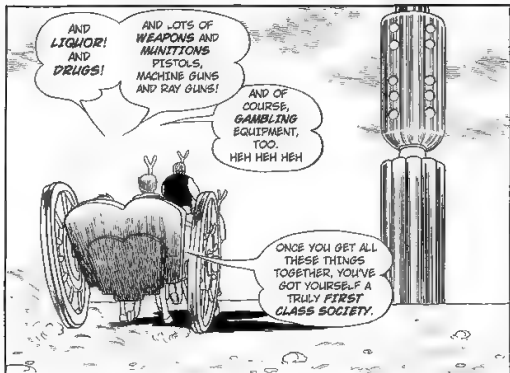
WILL YOU BE LEAVING US SOON?

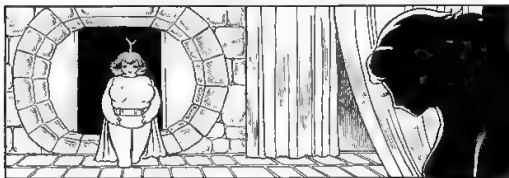
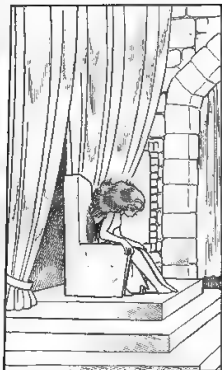
HAHPH.. AS LONG AS YOU DON'T OBJECT, I'LL STAY A BIT AND SEE IF I CAN DO SOME BUSINESS HERE AFTER ALL.

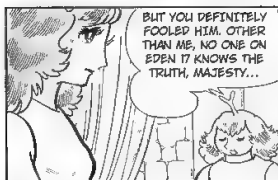


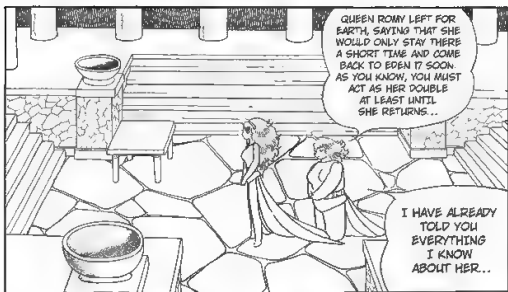
SO YOU'LL OPEN A STOREFRONT HERE, AFTER ALL?

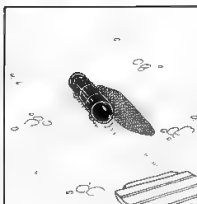
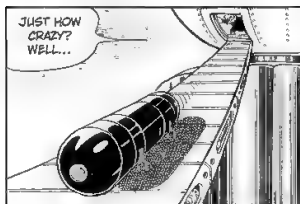
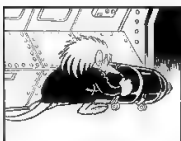
OH, DON'T YOU WORRY. OLD ZUDARBAN HAS LOTS OF WONDERFUL THINGS TO SELL YOU... HEH HEH HEH







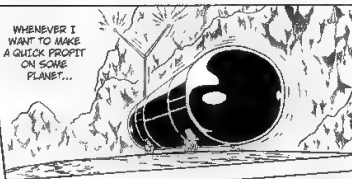




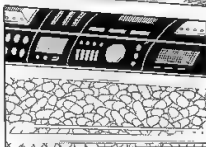
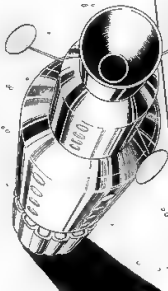
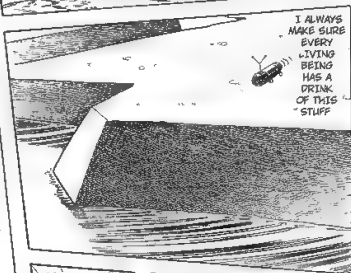
FIRST,
THEY'LL
UNDERGO
FEELINGS OF
INSATIABLE
DESIRE

AN
UNQUENCHABLE
THIRST FOR
LUXURY AND
POSSES-
SIONS
UNCONTROL-
LABLE
LAZINESS
A NEED FOR
CONQUEST
AND AN
INSATIABLE
CRAVING FOR
SEX!

WHENEVER I
WANT TO MAKE
A QUICK PROFIT
ON SOME
PLANET...



I ALWAYS
MAKE SURE
EVERY
LIVING
BEING
HAS A
DRINK
OF THIS
"STUFF"



THERE IT GOES.
RIGHT INTO THE
WATER SUPPLY



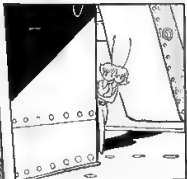
HEH HEH HEH
PUTTING IT
INTO THE WATER
MAKES IT SO
EASY. NO FUSS
AT ALL...



AFTER THREE DAYS,
ALL I HAVE TO DO
IS OPEN SHOP
I CAN SELL ALL THE
GUNS AND BOOZE AND
DRUGS I WANT .

LIKE THAT
OLD SAYING
BACK ON
EARTH...

"ALL GOOD
THINGS
COME TO
THOSE
WHO WAIT"

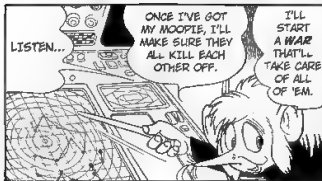
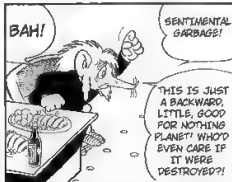
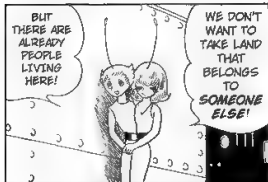
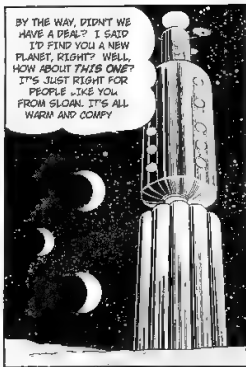
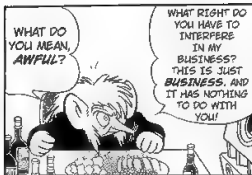


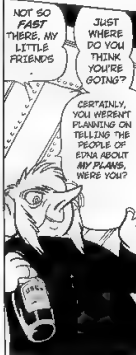
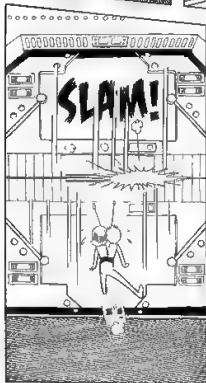
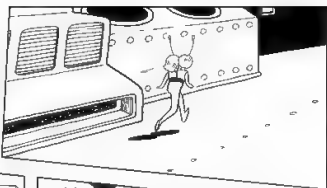
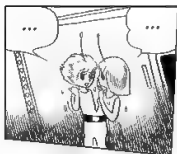
WELL,
WELL, IF
IT ISN'T
NORVA...



HOW CAN YOU DO
SUCH AN AWFUL
THING, ZUDARBAN!?

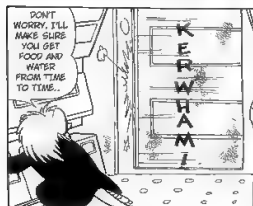


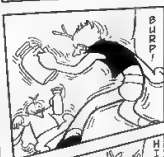
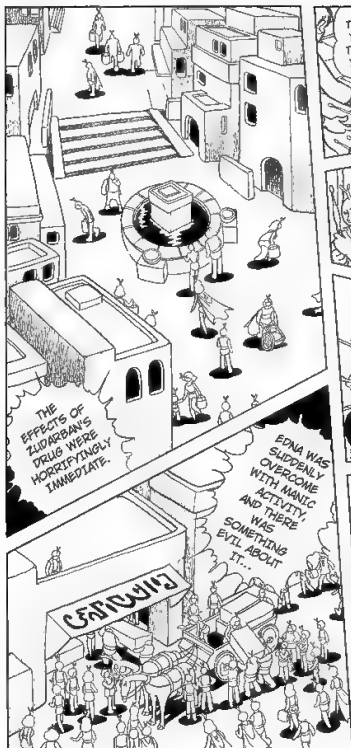


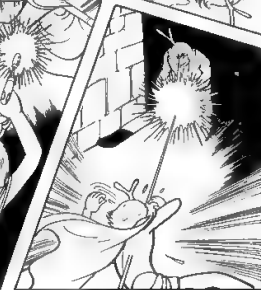


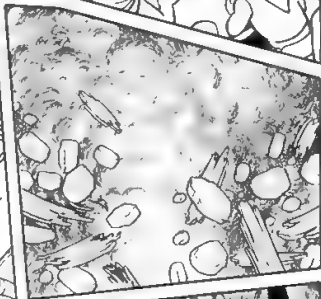
JUST WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

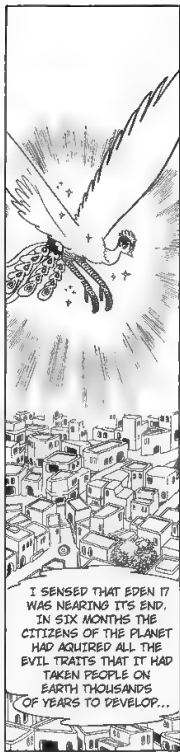
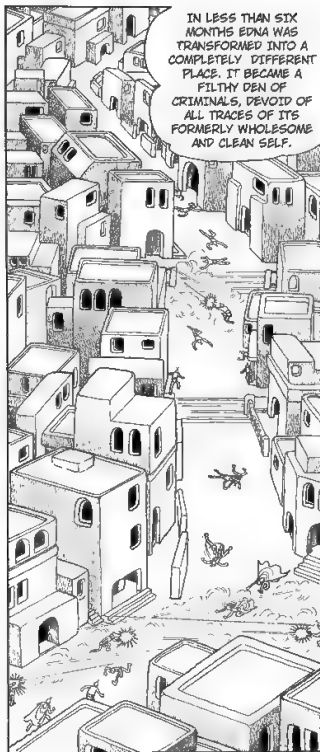
CERTAINLY, YOU WEREN'T PLANNING ON TELLING THE PEOPLE OF EDNA ABOUT MY PLANS, WERE YOU?

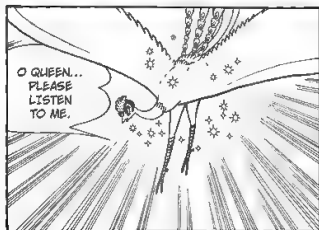
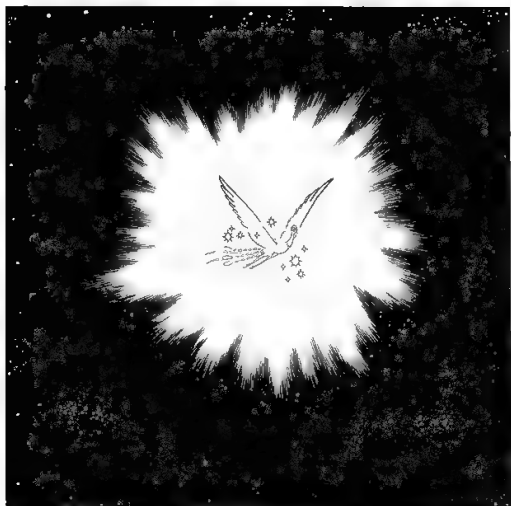




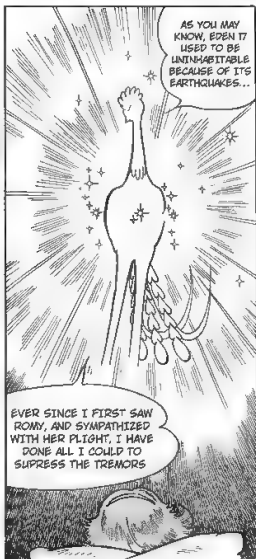


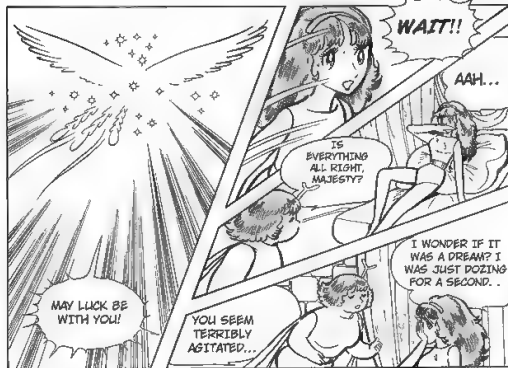






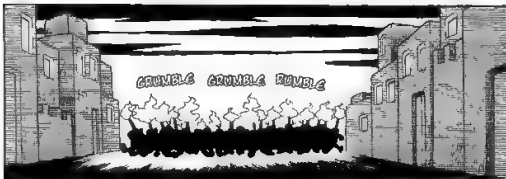
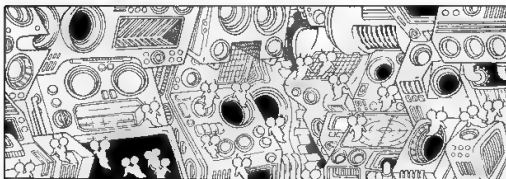
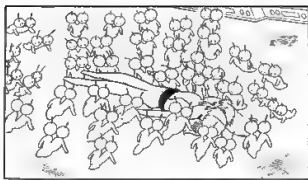
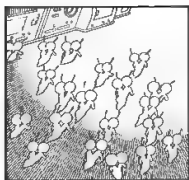




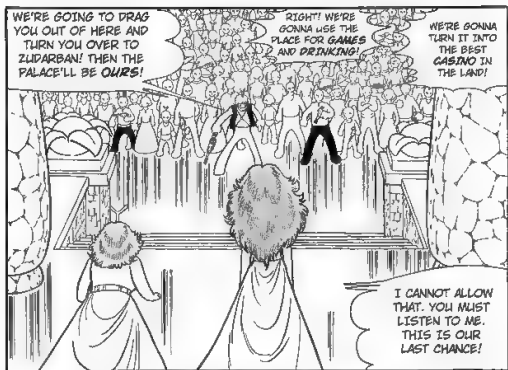
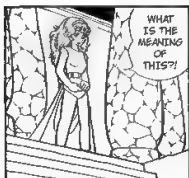






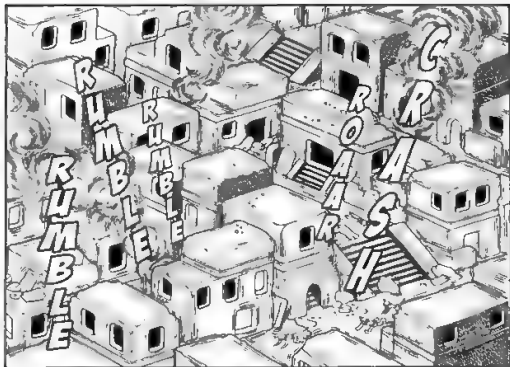


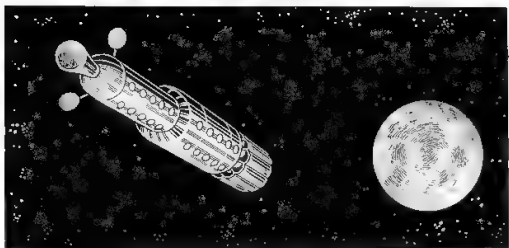


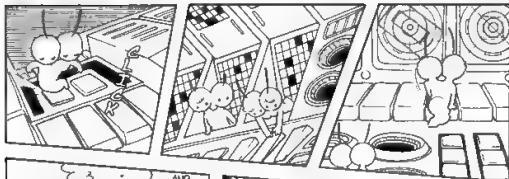




EVEN IT SHOOK EVER SO
SLIGHTLY BUT THAT WAS
MORE THAN ENOUGH TO
DESTROY EVERYTHING ON
THE PLANET'S SURFACE







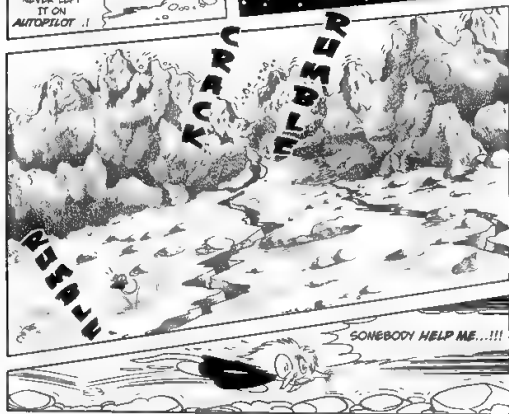
AND
WHO'S
PILOTING
MY
SHIP!?"

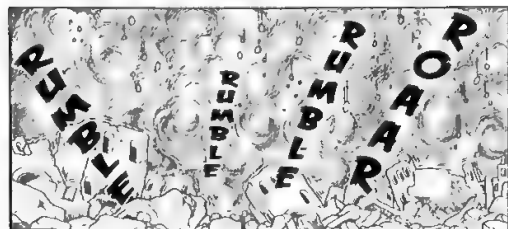
ARRGH. .
I SHOULD HAVE
NEVER LEFT
IT ON
AUTOPILOT. !

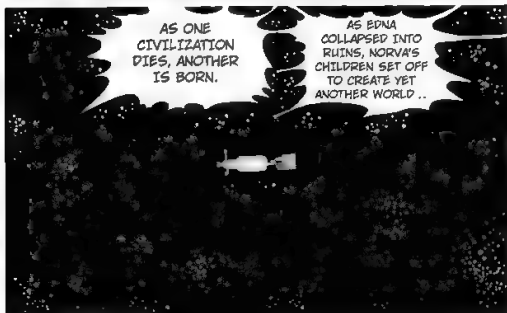
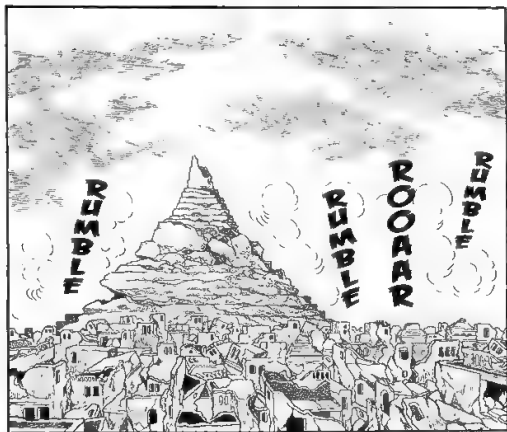


NORVA'S CHILDREN HAD DECIDED TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR OWN DESTINY

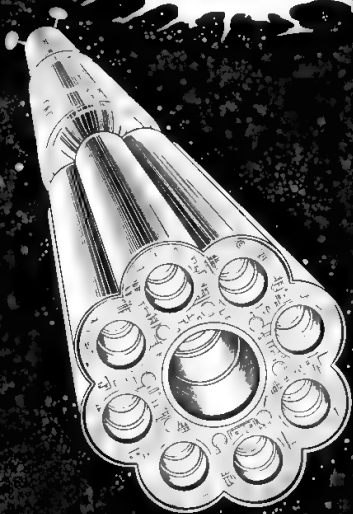
THEY HAD
BLASTED
OFF IN
ZUDARBAN'S
SHIP
SEARCH OF
A NEW AND
BETTER
PLANET TO
INHABIT

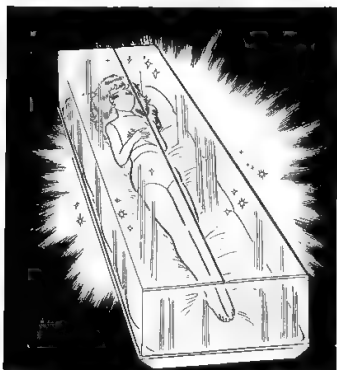
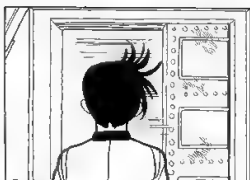






AND AS FOR EDEN 17... NO ONE
EVER SET FOOT ON THE RUINED
PLANET AGAIN WITH ONE
EXCEPTION ONLY A FEW MONTHS
AFTER THE GIANT EARTHQUAKES,
GORO MAKIMURA, THE SPACE PILOT,
STOPPED FOR A SPECIAL VISIT





IT'S ABOUT THE PILOT WHO GETS STRANDED ON A TINY PLANET RULED BY A LITTLE PRINCE...

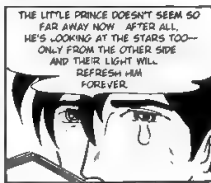
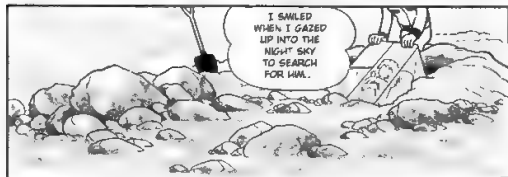
WHEN THE PILOT IS ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR HOME, THE LITTLE PRINCE GETS BITTEN BY A DEADLY SNAKE. SO HE TELLS THE PILOT HE'S GOING HOME TOO. I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SYMBOLISM UNTIL I WAS NINETEEN OLIVER.

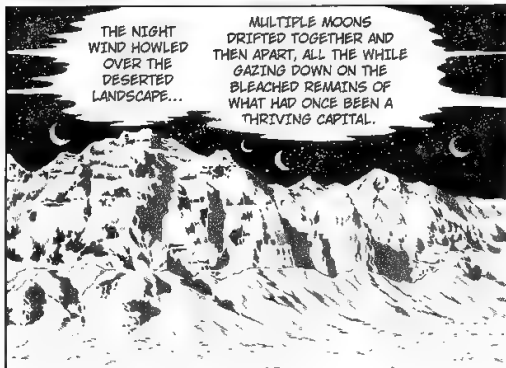
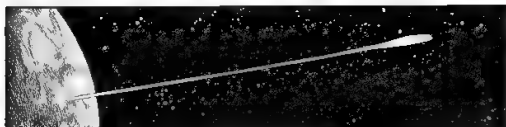
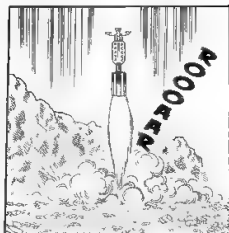
BUT I ALWAYS CRIED WHEN I GOT TO THAT PART

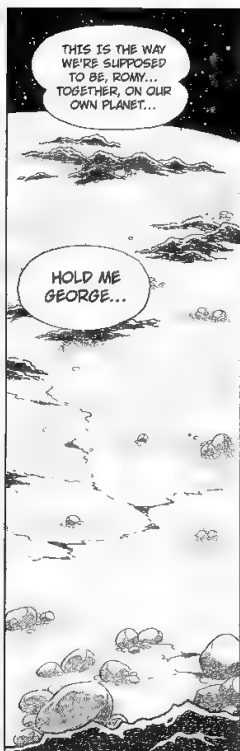
BECAUSE EVEN AS A LITTLE BOY I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LITTLE PRINCE AND THE PILOT WOULD NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.


I FELT LIKE I WAS LOSING MY BEST FRIEND...

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ALL THE THINGS THE LITTLE PRINCE SAID AS HE DIED IN THE PILOT'S ARMS, BUT HIS WORDS SOUNDED BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE TO ME ALL THE SAME. HE TALKED ABOUT HOW YOU CAN'T SEE THE REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE... AND THAT WHEN YOU LOOK AT SOMETHING BIG THAT YOU CAN SEE, IT REMINDS YOU OF SMALL THINGS YOU LOVE THAT YOU CAN'T.









THERE ARE COUNTLESS LEGENDS AND
STORIES IN THE UNIVERSE, BUT THE ONE I
SHALL NEVER FORGET IS ABOUT THE TINY
PLANET NAMED EDEN 17, WHERE A WOMAN
LIVED, AND SUFFERED FOR HER LOVE...

AND HER
NAME WAS
ROMY...

ABOUT THIS EDITION OF *PHOENIX*: *NOSTALGIA*

The twelve self-contained yet interlinked stories that compose *Phoenix* (*Hi no tori* in Japanese, literally "Firebird") is considered by many to be the summit of Osamu Tezuka's artistic achievement. Tezuka himself referred to *Phoenix* as his "life work." Painstakingly composed over a span decades (initial versions appeared as early as 1954), serialized in a number of venues, and left incomplete with Tezuka's death in 1989, *Phoenix* represents Tezuka's ambitious attempt to push all he knew about the comics medium to address fundamental questions about existence.

All twelve stories in *Phoenix* are linked by the presence of the mythical bird, an immortal guardian of the universal life force. Read in order, the separate stories jump across time, alternating between a distant future and a distant past, converging on the present, with characters from one story being reincarnated in another. The existing twelve stories, totaling over three thousand pages of work, are subtitled "Dawn," "Future," "Yamato," "Space," "Karma," "Resurrection," "Robe of Feathers," "Nostalgia," "Civil War," "Life," "Strange Beings," and "Sun."

This edition, *Phoenix: Nostalgia*, is an English translation of the seventh of the twelve *Phoenix* stories. "Nostalgia" was first serialized in 1976-8 in the monthly magazine COM, which was published by Tezuka as a venue to feature work too challenging or experimental for inclusion in mainstream manga magazines. The only other portion of *Phoenix* to appear in English previously is a 27-page excerpt from Dadakai's translation of "Karma," which was printed in Frederik L. Schodt's *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*.

AFTERWORD

By Takayuki Matsutani

"Tezuka-sensei came to Earth from a distant universe, and when his mission here was accomplished, he returned to outer space..." This notion was expressed several times in the tremendous flood of condolences given by intellectuals, artists, and others active in the fields of manga, film, music, and publishing when Osamu Tezuka passed away thirteen years ago. At the time, my grief over his death was so fresh I dismissed the idea as mere science-fiction fancy. Later, however, as I began sorting through Osamu Tezuka's legacy, I truly came to believe "Tezuka was a space alien"—it was the only adequate way of explaining his extraordinary artistry.

Look at *Phoenix*. I won't go into an analysis of the story; rather, I will just point out that it is one of many manga series he created, that during his career of forty-odd years, Tezuka drew 150,000 pages like those you see here. Simple arithmetic shows this comes out to ten pages a day—without a single day off! That's not all. Tezuka also produced over sixty animation titles (and *Astro Boy*, for instance, a TV series with two hundred episodes, is counted here as just one title!). Add to this over thirty books of prose, frequent television and radio appearances, lectures, interviews, and travels, not to mention stints as producer or director at various expos and other events...It seems impossible that one person could have done it all, yet Tezuka did. Moreover, he did it all himself, virtually without any help. Then consider the breadth of subjects and genres he tackled: historical works, contemporary issues, science fiction, politics, culture, education, character-based drama, epics, short stories, picture books for toddlers, mysteries, psychodramas, fantasy, nonsense, satire, and stories for boys, girls, young adults, and mature readers...in other words, everything under the sun.

It is extremely unfortunate that Tezuka did not live to see the 21st century, where so many of his stories are set.

In 2001, Japan entered an unprecedented economic recession, while the U.S. was assaulted on September 11 by terrorist attacks that far surpassed our wildest imaginings. These attacks then triggered the retaliatory war in Afghanistan, while in the Middle East the Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalated to new heights of violence. The 21st century has gotten off to a horrific start, and now in 2002, the countdown to Armageddon seems only to have accelerated. As globalization moves forward, the world is getting smaller and smaller. If Tezuka were alive today, how would he feel about all this? What kind of message would he send out to children through his works? Sadly, this is something we cannot know.

Although this *Future* takes place far beyond our time, in the third millennium A.D., Tezuka set *Astro Boy's* birthday in the opening years of the 21st century—April 7, 2003, to be exact—only fifty years ahead of the time *Astro Boy* began serialization in 1952. Just seven years after the devastation of World War II, when Japan was still a poor, scrabbling country, Tezuka imagined high-rises and underground cities, expressways snaking between skyscrapers, TV phones, trips to the moon, masses of industrial robots, and even a revolt by robots. Many of these things now actually exist in today's world, lending proof to Tezuka's astounding visionary powers. But even more extraordinary to my mind is the fact that, at a time when Japanese cities were still in ruins, when the Japanese people were living day-to-day and hand-to-mouth, and as such put economic recovery above all else, Tezuka—in such works as *Jungle Taitei* (which began serialization in 1950) and *Astro Boy*—was addressing environmental issues, calling for coexistence between human beings and other animals, and reminding us to take care of our precious planet Earth. These themes, which also dominate the *Phoenix* series, are the most pressing and relevant issues facing humanity today. That Tezuka's imagination could reach so far amidst the reality of 1950s Japan is the mark of genius.

Tezuka continued working up to three weeks before his death. As his strength waned, and he became too weak even to sit up in bed, he would still struggle with all his might to rise.

"I'm begging you, let me work!" were his final words. His wife desperately tried to calm him down, but Tezuka had

always been a workaholic, a man who worked without rest. What made Tezuka so compulsively creative, so urgently obsessive about his work?

Tezuka experienced World War II as a teenager. He spoke of having seen entire neighborhoods turned into a sea of flames by bombs and charred corpses lying on the streets afterwards. He remembered the deeply comforting sight of lights shining brightly in people's homes the night of August 15, 1945—the first night of peace. The war was finally over, the blackouts a thing of the past, and he savored the return of peace with profound gratitude. But at the same time, he swore to himself never to forget the tragic consequences of war, and to pass on his own experiences of war to the children of the future.

The next year, 1946, Tezuka was studying medicine at Osaka University and also made his debut as a professional manga artist. Although he did brilliant manga work and met with success, Tezuka finished his studies as well and obtained a physician's license. Medicine was, then as now, a highly respected and economically stable profession. In contrast, children's manga were dismissed as cheap entertainment; moreover, only a handful of people could make a living from drawing them. Even so, and in spite of the social conditions of the time, Tezuka chose manga over medicine.

Of course he loved drawing manga, probably loved it more than anything else. But I believe he was driven by something more than that: he chose manga because he felt it was his mission to spread the message of peace and respect for life to the children of the future. And Tezuka probably knew, better than anyone else, that he had staked his future on an amazing medium. Today, computer-enhanced Hollywood movies are taking the world by storm. With computer graphics, people can morph easily into different shapes and interact in the same frame with dinosaurs. Some say that manga and animation have lost their advantages and been surpassed. But for those of us who have read Tezuka's works, Hollywood has only now caught up, just barely, with the expressive capacity of manga. Over fifty years ago, Tezuka knew that manga—back then an art form still in its infancy—could express anything and everything the imagination could conjure, from the mundane to the utterly fantastic.

However, and this is probably the same all over the world, manga has always been viewed as inferior to other art forms, such as painting, prose, music, and theater. Manga was denounced by adults, who claimed it had a bad influence on children. Tezuka battled against the censure of these adults all his life, and this fight for acceptance was another driving force in his passion for work.

Some years ago, Japanese newspapers reported an incident in which children were told to bring all their manga books to school so they could throw them into a big bonfire in the yard. Yes, recent book-burnings in Japan focused on manga. I don't claim that all manga are good. As with any other art form, there is good work and bad work. But Tezuka, conscious of the average adult's bias toward manga, worked indefatigably to change that bias. Most important, of course, he created high-quality manga, but he also appeared frequently on TV, wrote essays and articles for magazines and newspapers, and did everything else he could in his crusade to bring manga the recognition it deserved as a legitimate art form.

In the year Tezuka died, a national art museum held an Osamu Tezuka exhibition. No museum of that stature had ever mounted a manga-related exhibition before. The culture of manga has been supported by many talented artists, most of them inspired by Tezuka, and today, there are numerous manga works that far outstrip novels and films in popularity, scope, and ambition.

The day after Tezuka passed away, a major newspaper eulogized him in an editorial, "Why do Japanese love manga so much? Foreigners apparently find it very strange to see adults engrossed in weekly comic magazines on the train...One explanation for this is that, in their countries, they did not have Osamu Tezuka." Not only was it extremely unusual for a major newspaper, let alone in an editorial, to discuss manga or a manga artist, but this was praise of the highest sort. Yes, manga in Japan today have earned a secure place as a respectable art form.

Osamu Tezuka devoted his entire life to manga, and *Phoenix* is one of his representative works. I hope you enjoy it.

Takayuki Matsutani
President, Tezuka Productions

Translated from the Japanese by Akemi Wagnmuller

PHOENIX AND ME

By Osamu Tezuka



The serialization of *Jungle Taitai* in *Shonen Jump* ended in 1954, and I was at a loss as to what to create next.

Then I saw Stravinsky's famous ballet, *L'oiseau de Feu*. Of course the ballet itself was excellent, but I was especially intrigued by the prima ballerina dancing as the spirit of the phoenix.

The ballet is based on an old Russian legend about a prince that has been captured by a demon. The spirit of the phoenix saves the prince by acting as a guide for his escape. I thought that this passionate, elegant, and mysterious bird would make a wonderful main character comparable to the likes of Leo from *Jungle Taitai*.

Actually, every country has a legend about a mysterious bird such as the phoenix. In these legends, the symbol of supernatural life force takes form as a bird, such as the immortal bird called the Hou-ou from the legend of Hourai-san.

I wanted to utilize this phoenix to portray Japanese history in my own way. The theme would be about man's attachment to life and the complications that arise from greed. The phoenix would be the vehicle that would bring it all together.

As a new challenge, I wanted to start by creating the beginning and then the end of a long story. The story would then return to an ancient period right after the dawn of man. I would then continue to go back and forth, between past and future. In the end, I would set the story where past and future converge—the present. This story, set in the present, would tie all the previous stories together to form a long drama running from the dawn of man all the way to the distant future.

Each story would stand on its own and seem to have nothing to do with the other stories, but the final story would tie everything together—and for the first time, the reader would realize that the structure of the series is such that each story would be just one part of a much longer story. After all, man's history does not have clear divisions or breaks.

Each episode would portray life from various angles and set up different problems. Moreover, the style of each of the episodes would vary from one another, covering a range of genres: science-fiction, war story, mystery, comedy.

I don't know how many more years *Phoenix* will continue, but after it is completed, please go back and read through the whole series again. Otherwise, it will be difficult for me to respond to criticism.

Osamu Tezuka, December 1969

Translated from the Japanese by Andy Nakukiani